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# LEGENDS OF PALESTINE

BY

ZEV VILNAY



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## PREFACE

THE present volume of Legends of Palestine is a translation with additions and re-arrangements of a Hebrew volume published by the same author under the title *Agadot Erez Yisrael*, which appeared in London in 1929. The translation differs from the original in that one section, fifty tales in all, has been omitted from the English book whereas other legends have been added. It is, in a sense, therefore, a new contribution containing over seventy tales which did not appear in the Hebrew.

These Legends are almost entirely derived from Hebrew and Arabic sources, both literary and from the spoken word. They cover the entire period of Jewish history, being adaptations of biblical, talmudic and midrashic stories and coming down to modern legends which grew up as late as 1929. In his preface to the Hebrew original the author indicates that, prior to the modern settlement, the legends concerned themselves mainly with the description of graves of patriarchs, saints and holy men. These were gathered from the old Jews of the Synagogue, from the Arabs, especially the fellahin who live in villages, and not infrequently from the Bedouins, whose memories breathe the ancient Hebrew spirit.



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## I. THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

EZEKIEL THE PROPHET SAID: "SO  
SPEAKETH THE LORD: THIS IS JERU-  
SALEM, I HAVE SET IT IN THE MIDST  
OF THE NATIONS, AND ROUND ABOUT IT  
ARE COUNTRIES."

*Thus saith the Lord God*



## 1. THE STONE OF FOUNDATION

The Prophet Isaiah said: "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, . . . , a costly corner-stone of sure foundation."

The ancients believed that the Holy Land was in the center of the world, which in their eyes appeared as a flat table. Jerusalem was the center of the Holy Land, and the Temple on Mount Moriah was the center of Jerusalem. In the Mosque of Omar, which is built upon the site of the Temple, a big rock now rises. This is the Stone of Foundation marking the summit of Mount Moriah, the center of all the world. (See: Maps of the world, Fig. 1-2.)

A. The Sages of Israel said: "The Land of Israel is in the center of the world. Jerusalem is the center of the Land of Israel. The Temple is the center of Jerusalem. The Holy of Holies is the center of the Temple, the Holy Ark is the center of the Holy of Holies, and the Stone of Foundation (*Eben ha-Shetiyah*) is in front of the Holy of Holies.

"Why was it called in Hebrew: *Eben ha-Shetiyah*, the Stone of Foundation?—Because it is the foundation stone of all the world."

B. Rabbi Samuel the younger said: "This world is like unto the human eye, for the white is the ocean which girds the earth; the iris is the earth upon which

we dwell; the pupil is Jerusalem and the image therein is the Temple of the Lord. May it be built speedily in our day and in the days of all Israel, Amen!"

Another Sage said: "The Almighty created the world in the same manner as a child is formed in its mother's



Fig. 1: The Map of the World (ca. 1250)

womb. Just as a child begins to grow from its navel and then develops into its full form, so the world began from its central point and then developed in all direc-

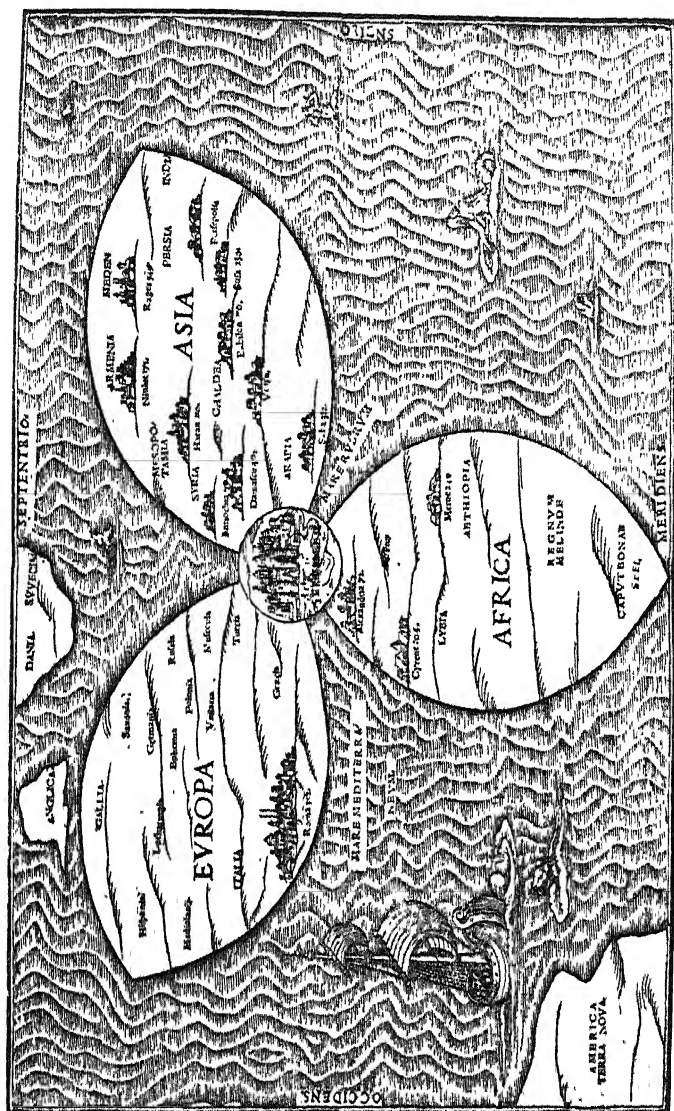


Fig. 2: The Map of the World (1585)

tions. The 'navel' of the world is Jerusalem and its core is the Great Altar."

C. The ancients believed that a great Abyss lay deep beneath the Stone of Foundation. When King David came to dig the foundations for the Temple round this Stone, he dug to a depth of 1500 cubits.... At length he found a projecting stone which he wished to remove. But the Stone said to him: "This thou canst not do." David asked: "Why?" and it answered, "I cover the mouth of the Abyss." "Since when?" asked the king. "Since the day when I heard the voice of the Lord upon Mount Sinai saying, 'I am the Lord thy God!' Then the Earth shook and was almost swallowed in the depths of the Abyss; I hastened and closed it and so I saved the Earth."

But David would not hearken and wished to remove it; and as he tried, the waters of the Abyss rose in great torrents and appeared as if they were about to flood the world. Then David began to sing the Songs of Degrees from the Book of Psalms and the waters of the Abyss returned to their place.

D. There was a certain pearl inside the fish which swallowed Jonah the Prophet, and this pearl gave light to him, as doth the sun at noontime. It showed Jonah all that is found in the sea and its abysses; the pillars of the earth and its foundations; the Temple of the Lord and the Stone of Foundation set in the depths of the Temple; with the sons of Korah, who were swallowed

up in the earth when they attacked Moses and Aaron, standing and praying thereon.

The fish said to Jonah: "Behold, you are now opposite the Temple of the Lord. Pray, and you will be answered."

Jonah prayed before the Almighty, blessed be He, and he was saved.

## 2. THE STONE OF PARADISE

"Paradise longs for Jerusalem and Jerusalem longs for Paradise."

A. In the name of Mohammed it is said: "The Stone of Foundation (*Al-Zahrah*), the Palm-Tree (*Al-'Ajwah*) and the Tree of Knowledge (*Al-Shajarah*) which is a vine, are from the Garden of Paradise!"

On the western façade of the Mosque of Omar is now written: "Rock, Holy House from Paradise!"

The Sages of the Moslems say: At the Resurrection, the Kaaba Stone of Holy Mecca will come to the Stone of Paradise in Holy Jerusalem. And when the Stone sees this, it will say: "Peace be to the great guest!"

The Stone of Foundation rests upon the crown of a palm, which grows by one of the rivers of Eden. By this stream sits Pharaoh's wife and Miriam, sister of Moses, in the shade of the palm, weaving garments for the dwellers of Eden, in preparation for the Resurrection of the Dead.

Others say: The whole world rests upon a mighty



whale (Leviathan), whose head is at the place of the rising of the sun and whose tail is at the setting thereof. The Stone of Paradise rests on the very center of the back of this giant whale.

B. It was said that the Stone of Foundation hovered in the air between the sky and the earth without any support. Those who saw it were astonished and afraid, and when women perceived it they fainted with fear. The people, therefore, built a fence on the ground beneath the floating rock, thereby creating a cave which extends from this rock to the earth (Fig. 3). In this cave the prayers of men are most agreeable to the Divinity. Therefore all the prophets and kings since the creation of the world have come hither to pray. Even now the prophets and angels come here in invisible troops to say their prayers, apart from the ordinary guard of seventy thousand angels who surround it perpetually.

All those who had faithfully performed their devotions at this celebrated cave and round the Rock were furnished at one time by the Moslem guardian with a certificate testifying to this. This certificate was to be buried with the dead, so that it might be shown to the doorkeeper of Paradise as a ticket of admission.

C. Beneath this cave, where prophets and kings meditated, there is another cave, now closed and blocked by a round slab. It is said that all the souls of the dead come to pray in this cave, which is like a



Fig. 3: The Stone of Paradise

bottomless well. Therefore, it is called by the Arabs: *Bir al-Arwah*—the Well of the Souls.

It is told that in this cave were hidden, since the destruction of Jerusalem, the vessels of the Temple and the treasures of the Kings of Judah. But nobody knew the exact spot where the Holy Ark was hidden.

The Sages of Israel tell about an adjutant high priest who used to kneel opposite the chambers of wood (in the Temple) because there was a tradition handed down from his parents that the Holy Ark was hidden there. There is also a story about a priest who was searching (in the Temple court) for something and found a slab which was different from the others. He went to tell this to his friends, but before he had finished speaking, his soul departed from his body. Then the priests knew that the Holy Ark was hidden beneath this peculiar slab.

It is related that in the year 1911 people penetrated into the closed cave beneath the Stone of Foundation and carried off the Crown of David, the Sword of Solomon, the Holy Ark, the Tables of the Law and gold beyond count.

### 3. THE STONE OF DRINKING

A. The source of all the rivers and clouds of the world is hidden under the Stone of Foundation. The Moslem Abu-Huraira said on the authority of Mohammed: "All rivers and clouds, vapors and winds come from under the holy rock in Jerusalem."

Abu Abbas said: "Jerusalem is provided with dew and rain ever since Allah created years and days." All the fresh waters of the world have their origin under the holy rock. Hence everybody who drinks water at night should say: "O water of the Holy City, I salute you!"

It is also said that the source of all the winds of the world is hidden beneath the holy rock of Jerusalem. Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro, who came to Palestine in 1488, writes to his son about "all the winds of the world that come and blow in Jerusalem. It is said that every wind before it goes to its destination comes to Jerusalem to pray to God. The Blessed One knows the truth!"

B. Some Sages of Israel say that this stone was called *Eben ha-Shetiyah*, not the Stone of Foundation, but the Stone of Drinking (in Hebrew *Shetiyah* = drinking), because beneath it is hidden the fountain from which the whole world drinks its water.

The Psalmist sings:

"His foundation is in the holy mountains  
The Lord loveth the gates of Zion.

.....

Glorious things are spoken of thee,  
O City of God. Selah.

.....

All my *springs* are in thee!"

## 4. THE STONE AND THE NAME

When King David had dug the foundation for the Temple, he found a stone resting on the mouth of the Abyss, with the Divine Name on it. He took up this stone and put it into the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The Sages of Israel began to fear lest some young men might learn the Divine Name and destroy the world—God forbid! They looked for means to prevent this., So they made two brazen lions, which they placed on iron pillars by the door of the Holy of Holies, one on the right and the other on the left. If anyone entered and learned the Divine Name, when he came out these lions would roar at him, so that through terror and fright the Name would be utterly driven out of his mind and forgotten.

Jesus of Nazareth came secretly to Jerusalem and, penetrating into the Temple, he learned the holy letters of the Divine Name. These he wrote on parchment, and uttering the Name to prevent pain, . . . he cut his flesh and hid the parchment therein. Then, again pronouncing the Name, he caused the flesh to grow together . . . As he left the door, the lions roared and the Name was erased from his mind. When he went outside the city he cut his flesh again and drew out the parchment, and when he had studied its letters, he learned the Name again . . .

Thus was he able to perform all his miracles and wonders . . .

## 5. THE FRAGMENT OF THE ROCK

After the capture of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, entered the Temple ruins and found the Rock of Foundation before him. He ordered his men to break off a fragment of the rock and take it to Babylon with the Temple treasures.

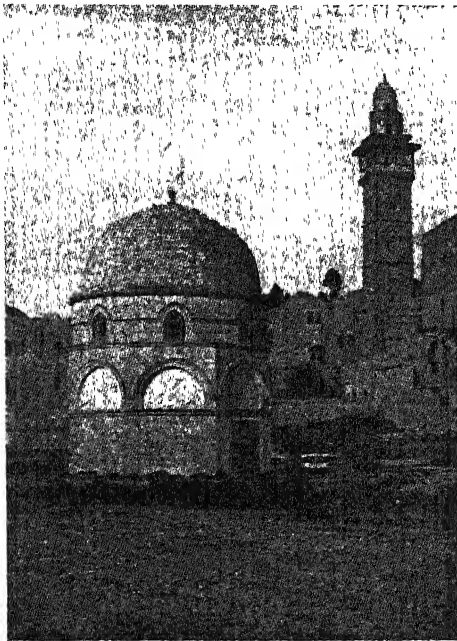


Fig. 4: The Dome of the Small Rock

When the Jews returned from Babylon, they brought with them the sacred vessels of the Temple together with this fragment and bore them to Mount Moriah

in great joy. There they set the rock on the very spot where King Solomon had stood and prayed when he dedicated the Holy Sanctuary.

To-day a small building with a dome is set above it, which is called in Arabic: the Dome of the Small Rock, sometimes also called: The Dome of King Solomon. (See Fig. 4).

## 6. THE STONE OF EDEN

In the floor of the Mosque of Omar is inserted a square green slab of jasper which the Arabs call the Stone of Eden, because it rests above one of the gates of Eden. It is related that under this stone also the grave of King Solomon lies concealed.

The Moslem Ibn Rabbih said: "When thou enterest the Mosque which is built on the Holy Rock, make thy prayer in the three corners thereof, and also pray on the slab which rivals the Rock itself in its glory, for it lies over one of the gates of Paradise!"

When Mohammed appeared in Jerusalem and entered the Temple, he put nineteen gold nails into the stone of Eden as a memorial of his visit and set the Angel Gabriel to guard them, saying to him: "Remember that should all these nails be removed, the world would return to nothingness."

But Satan, the accursed, attempted to creep in and remove these nails, for he wished to destroy the world, and to enter into the Garden of Eden which is beneath

it. In the course of time, by his cunning, Satan drew forth many nails. But when Satan came to steal the sixteenth nail, the Angel Gabriel fought with him and drove him away. In his haste Satan only succeeded in withdrawing half a nail.

Only three and a half nails now remain in the Stone of Eden, and the Angel Gabriel stands guard over them for ever.

## 7. THE BIRDS THAT TURNED TO STONE

King Solomon, wisest of mankind, sat one day at the entrance to his palace on the Temple Mount, delighting in the bright sky and clear daylight. Before him two cooing birds caressed each other, twittering merrily.

As the King looked up he heard one bird say to his spouse, "Who is this man seated here?" And she answered, "This is the King whose name and fame fill the world." Then the bird answered in mocking pride, "And do they call even him mighty? How is his power sufficient for all these palaces and fortresses? Did I so desire I could overthrow them in a second by fluttering one wing."

His spouse encouraged him, saying, "Do so, and show your valor and power, if you have the strength to carry out your words." And Solomon, listening to the conversation in astonishment, signed to the bird to approach, and asked him the cause of his overweening pride.



Terrified, the trembling bird answered the august King, "Let my Lord the King grant me forgiveness out of his loving-kindness and goodness of heart. I am nought but a poor powerless bird who can do him no evil. All that I said was only to please my wife and raise myself in her esteem." And Solomon laughed to himself and sent the bird back to his spouse.

She, meanwhile, stood on the roof and could not contain herself, waiting for her mate to return and tell

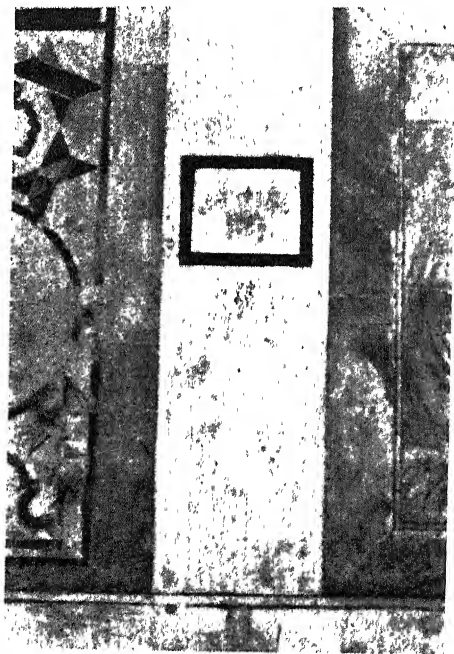


Fig. 5: The Birds that Turned to Stone

her why the King had sent for him. When he came back, she asked excitedly, "What did the King want?" And his chest swelling with pride, he answered, "The King heard my words and entreated me not to bring destruction upon his court and not to carry out my purpose."

When Solomon heard this, he grew wroth with the brazen bird and changed them both into stone slabs, to warn others to refrain from vain bragging and empty boasting, and to teach women folk not to incite their chosen ones in their vanity to undertake foolish and foolhardy deeds.

If nowadays you gaze at the southern wall of the Mosque of Omar, which rises on the site of Solomon's Temple, you will see a marble slab set in a black border; it is veined through with red in the likeness of two birds, and these are the birds that Solomon turned to stone. (See Fig. 5).

## 8. HA-REUBENI IN THE MOSQUE OF OMAR

David ha-Reubeni, who had proclaimed himself Messiah of Israel, came to Jerusalem from Haibar in Arabia. He was on his way to Rome to petition the Pope for help in his endeavor to restore the Jewish people to their land.

In the month of Adar in the year 1523, he entered the Mosque of Omar (Dome of the Rock), and he relates the following: "When I entered the Temple all the Arab

guards came to prostrate themselves before me and kissed my feet, and they said: 'Come, you blessed of the Lord, our Master, the son of our Master.' Then two of the chief guards led me to the cave which is beneath the Stone of Foundation (Fig. 3), and they said to me, 'Here prayed Elijah the prophet, and here King David, in this place prayed King Solomon, and in that, the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, and here prayed Mohammed!' I said to the guards, 'Now that I know all this, go your way, for I wish to pray here alone.' I remained in the Temple, and I fasted five weeks, no bread did I eat, and no water passed my lips, except on the eve of Sabbath.

"Now on the top of the Dome of the Rock there is a crescent which faces westward. On the first day of the Feast of Pentecost (*Shabuot*), this crescent was seen to face the East, and when the Arabs saw this, they shouted in great alarm. I asked them, 'Why do you shout?' They answered, 'Because of our sins this crescent has turned towards the East, which is an evil omen to the Arabs.'

"A workman climbed to the Dome and turned the crescent to its former position, but on the next day it was again facing the East. And the Arabs continued to shout and to weep as they vainly tried to turn the crescent.

"Then I knew that it was time to leave Jerusalem, for the wise men had told me, 'When you behold this sign, it is time to proceed to Rome.'"

## 9. THE MIRACLE OF THE CANDLES

Rabbi Meshullam, the son of Menahem, of Volterra, who visited Palestine in the year 1481, writes about the Mosque of Omar:

“There are Arab servants who keep themselves in strict purity. Inside the Mosque they light seven candles. Remember, gentle readers, that what I am about to relate is no myth. Every year when the Jews go to their synagogues on the Eve of *Tish'ah be-Ab*, the day of the destruction of the Temple, all candles in the Mosque go out of their own accord, and it is impossible to rekindle them. And the Arabs know when it is *Tish'ah be-Ab*, and therefore they keep it, as the Jews do. This is clear and well-known to everybody, without the slightest doubt.”

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## II. ON THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

“MOUNT MORIAH IS THE MOUNTAIN  
OF GOD. THE DIVINE PRESENCE RESTS  
ON MOUNT MORIAH.”



## 10. THE MOUNTAIN OF MORIAH

A. The Sages of Israel said: The Almighty, blessed be He, measured all the cities of the world and did not find one where the Temple could be built, save in Jerusalem. The Almighty measured all the mountains of the world and did not find one on which the Divine Presence could rest, save Mount Moriah.

Why is this mountain called Moriah? Because the word Moriah is derived from *mora* which in Hebrew means fear; from that mountain went forth the fear of the Lord to all mankind.

Another reason is because the Hebrew word *horaah* stands for learning; from that mountain went forth the learning of the Lord to all mankind.

The third reason is because the Hebrew word *orah* means light, and when the Almighty commanded, "Let there be light," it was from that mountain that the light first shone forth upon all mankind.

B. God took a spoonful of dust from Mount Moriah, where later the Holy Altar was erected, and created from it Adam, the first man. After Adam's expulsion from the Garden of Eden he lived on Mount Moriah. As it is written in the Book of Genesis: "The Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till *the earth whence he was taken.*" The Sages of Israel added: "Adam lived on Mount Moriah, because the gate of Eden was



close to Moriah. From that place God took him and to that place He brought him back."

The Sages also said: "Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, quarreled on Mount Moriah. Why did they quarrel? One said that the Holy Temple would be built in his portion, and the other said, no, it would be built in his portion." "And it came to pass that when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him." The Sages said: "This field is on Mount Moriah, the place of the Temple."

By the command of God, Abraham chose Mount Moriah upon which to offer up his only son Isaac as a sacrifice. And He said: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." When Abraham and Isaac arrived at Mount Moriah, God showed them the place and said: "This is the altar. It is the place where Adam, Cain and Abel, Noah and his sons, placed their offerings."

C. Mount Moriah was within the portion of Benjamin, after the land was conquered by the tribes of Israel. Why should Benjamin have proved so worthy that the Temple should be built on Moriah and the Divine Presence should rest in his portion? Because all the sons of Jacob were concerned in the selling of Joseph as a slave to Egypt, but not Benjamin. Again, all the sons of Jacob were born outside Palestine but Benjamin was born within its borders.

We may liken it also to the king who frequently visited his children, each of whom said to him: "Dwell with me." But the youngest of them said: "Can it be that my father will leave my elder brothers and will dwell with me?" So he went away and, covering his face, was sad at heart. When the father saw him thus, he said, "See, my youngest son hides his head in shame, and his heart is full of sorrow. Therefore I shall eat and drink with you, my children, but I shall dwell with him." So also said the Almighty, "My chosen House, the Temple, will be in the portion of Benjamin, though the sacrifices may come from every tribe of Israel."

We may liken it also to the king who had many children. As they grew up, each one left his father, and went his way. The youngest of them remained, ate and drank with him so that his father leaned upon him as he went forth and returned home. Thus acted Benjamin, the youngest of the sons of Jacob. And therefore the Almighty said, "Where the patriarch Jacob placed his hands in blessing, there shall the Divine Presence rest, in the portion of Benjamin."

## II. THE DOME OF THE CHAIN

On Mount Moriah east of the Mosque of Omar is a small building with a small dome, which is known as *Mahkamah al-Naby Daud*—The Tribunal of the prophet David.

In ancient times when Israel still dwelt in his land,

a great chain was suspended from this dome. Litigants or witnesses about to take an oath took hold of this chain and, if any man lied, a link would fall from the chain so that the falsehood stood revealed. In this manner the judge was enabled to punish the perjurer in accordance with the law.

Once there was a dispute between two men. One had left a number of gold coins with the other; when he went to get them back the other refused to return them, saying they had already been returned. So they brought the matter to court. The judge heard their pleas and told them to come to the Dome of the Chain on the morrow, in order to be sworn.

The defendant knew of the chain and planned this trick. He pierced a hole in his walking staff and placed in it the requisite number of gold coins. On the morrow when he had to take the oath, he gave his staff to the plaintiff for a while, and taking hold of the chain said: "I swear on my honor that I have put the money into the hands of this my comrade."

The judge, seeing nothing happen to the chain, was about to pronounce judgment in favor of the perjurer when a voice from heaven was heard, crying, "Let the chain be hid from this day forth, that it should not cause justice to stumble by reason of the cunning and deceit of men."

The chain at once disappeared and has never been seen since. But the building is still called also by the Arabs: *Kubbat al-Silsilah*—Dome of the Chain. (See Fig. 6).

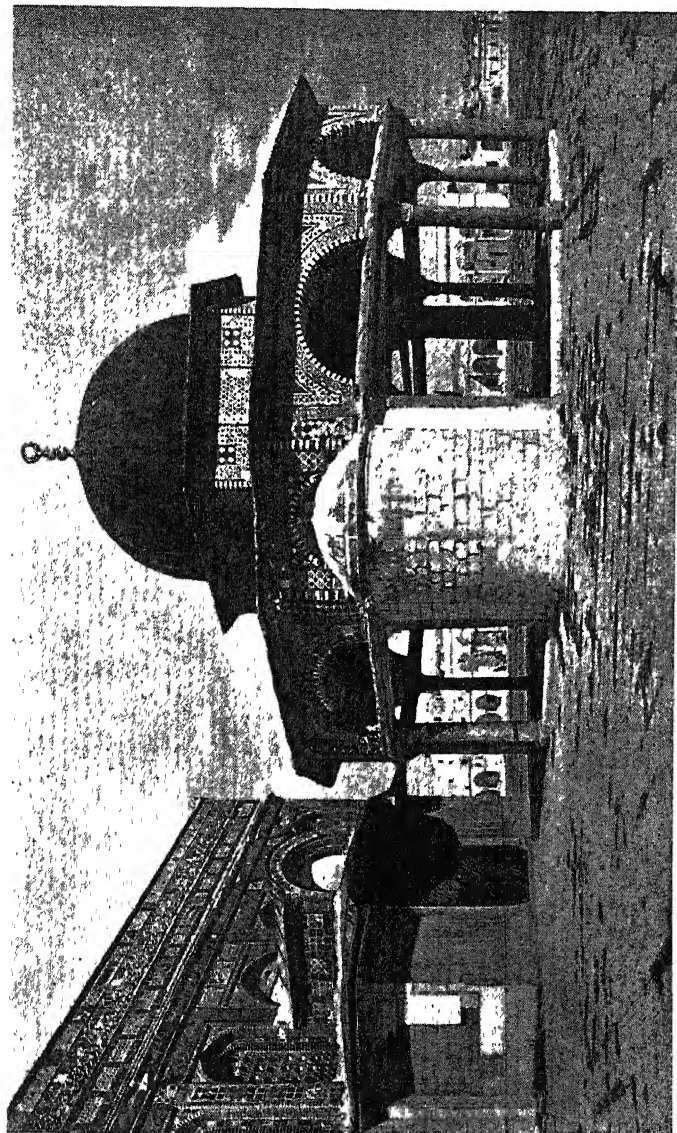


Fig. 6: The Dome of the Chain

## 12. THE THRONE OF SOLOMON

The Almighty Allah says to Jerusalem:  
"Thou art my throne, from which I descended  
to heaven."

A. At the northeast corner of the Temple area there is a small chamber called *Kursat Sulaiman*. The Throne of Solomon. It is said that the royal throne of Solomon once stood there. When the day of his death drew near he feared that it might become known to the demons who served him. So he seated himself on the throne, and thus leaning on his staff passed into eternal slumber. All who approached thought the King slept; and many days passed. At length there came a worm which gnawed through the staff until it was entirely consumed within, so that the staff gave way and the body toppled from the throne. And only then did they know that King Solomon was dead.

B. The staff of Solomon was taken from a Carob-tree (*Kharrub*). One day King Solomon noticed in his garden a young plant unknown to him. He said to the plant: "Of what use art thou?" "To destroy thy works," replied the plant.

"What is your name?" "*Kharrub*" (Carob), answered the plant. (*kharaba* in Arabic = *harab* in Hebrew, means to destroy).

Solomon dug up the Carob and planted it in an isolated corner of his garden, to prevent any harm coming from it. When it was full grown, he cut it down

and fashioned it into a staff for himself. On this staff he was leaning when he passed into eternal slumber. And now when the worm had hollowed the staff and the body of Solomon fell to the ground, the demons knew that the King whom they had feared was dead. They therefore proceeded to destroy his works.

Thus it was that the words of the young Carob-tree—"to destroy thy works"—were fulfilled.

### 13. THE HOLY NETTLE TREE

In addition to the olive and cypress trees which grow on Mount Moriah in the Temple area, there are also a few nettle trees (*Celtis australis*). They are lofty, with handsome crowns and longish pointed leaves. Their fruit is small and grape-shaped.

The first foundations of the Temple as laid by King Solomon were destroyed by some hidden hand. He laid them anew and found them destroyed again. This puzzled the King sorely, and only after much investigation did he discover that the evil eye rested upon his work, and that evil spirits were wreaking vengeance upon him. He sought for means to keep these at a distance from Mount Moriah, and by planting nettle trees round the area he succeeded in driving away the demons: for such trees ward off the evil eye.

To-day you still find Arabs plucking small twigs of the nettle trees and making charms out of them. The most effective of them is the one plucked after sunset

on the twenty-seventh day of the fast-month of Ramadan. The twig is usually placed in a blue bead and hung as a charm round the neck of man or beast.

At night you sometimes see an Arab traveling over a forsaken road with his ass, wearing a bead containing such a charm. And should sudden fear seize him and he imagines that demons are coming after him, he recites these words: "Oh Demon! Oh Demon! Dost thou not see the bead and the twig of the nettle tree?"

#### 14. THE WELL OF THE LEAF

In the Temple area are to be found great wells and cisterns which hold the rain-water. Near the Mosque al-Aksa there is a big well called in Arabic: *Bir al-Waraqa*—The Well of the Leaf.

Why is it so called?

Once a Sheikh was drawing water from this well, when his bucket slipped from his hand and fell to the bottom. As there was but little water in the well he descended in order to search for the bucket. After wading for some distance along the bed of the well, he suddenly saw an opening whence streamed a bright light. He passed through and walked on, deriving great pleasure from all he saw, till he came to the gate of Eden. Tremblingly he entered, hastily plucked a leaf from a tree and then rushed forth again and returned to his friends. He told them all that had befallen him and showed the leaf as witness. Wise men examined

the leaf and found it was of a kind known to grow only on the trees of Eden. So others went down the same well to discover the gate of Eden, but they did not succeed in finding it.

And the well has been called the "Well of the Leaf" ever since.

### 15. THE BATH OF HEALING

Near the Flax Gate (*Bab al-Kittan*) of the Temple Mount in the closed market-place which the Jews call "The Shops" (*ha-Hanuyot*), there is the most famous Moslem bath in Jerusalem called: *Hammam al-Shifa'*—the Bath of Healing. They believe that its waters come from the well of Zamzam, which is in Mecca, the holy city of Arabia. Should you appear unconvinced, they will tell you the following story which you must admit is conclusive proof.

A few years ago, a Moslem from India went on his pilgrimage to Mecca. As he was bathing in the holy waters of the cistern of Zamzam, a unique and valuable bowl which he had brought with him was carried away by the stream. This bowl was made of copper, and engraved thereon were many artistic and distinguishing pictures and designs.

The pilgrim was much grieved at his loss, but a remarkable thing happened. When he came to Jerusalem and went to the Bath of Healing, there he found this very bowl. Only the water which flows underground from Mecca to Jerusalem could have brought it thither!



## 16. THE GATE OF SIN

North of the Mosque of Omar there is a gate which the Arabs call: *Bab al-Khetta*—the Gate of Sin.

Why was this gate so named?

When the children of Israel sinned in the wilderness, rebelling against God's words, He commanded them: "When ye come unto Jerusalem you shall stand before Mount Moriah and for the sins that ye committed in the wilderness, shall ye proclaim: '*Khett! Khett!*' (sin! sin!). Then shall ye be forgiven."

But when the children of Israel came to Jerusalem, they stood before Mount Moriah and instead of crying "*Khett!*" they cried "*Iittah! Iittah!*"--wheat! wheat! And the Lord was angry with them and a grievous plague fell upon them which slew many and never ceased until they cried "*Khett! Khett!*"

On the same spot where the children of Israel uttered aloud these words, a gate was erected which was called the Gate of Sin. It is believed that anyone who passes this gate and says: "O Lord, may I be relieved from the burden of my sin," will be completely forgiven.

It is said that the panels of this gate were brought from one of the gates of Jericho which sank into the earth in the days of Joshua, the son of Nun.

Not far from the Gate of Sin, on the northeastern side of the Temple area, is another gate called *Bab al-Asbat*—"Gate of the Tribes," for through it the

tribes of Israel passed as they ascended in pilgrimage for the high festivals to the Holy Sanctuary. Close by this gate there is also a big pool which is called: *Birkat (Beni) Israel (Israin)*—the pool of (the children) of Israel, which can be seen to this day.

## 17. THE GATE OF MERCY

“Every morning in heaven one of the gates of Paradise is opened:  
And from it light and mercy stream down upon Jerusalem.”

A. In the eastern wall surrounding Mount Moriah, there can be seen a closed gate called by the Jews the Gate of Mercy (*Sha'ar ha-Rahamim*). There you will be shown a large stone and certain pillars and cupolas. It is said that they were given to King Solomon by the Queen of Sheba.

This gate has two closed portals. The northern is called the Gate of Penitence, and the southern the Gate of Mercy. Whosoever would repent prays first at the Gate of Penitence and afterwards goes over to the Gate of Mercy, through which God's mercy passeth.

It is also related that King Solomon built this double gate, making one for bridegrooms and the other for mourners. On the Sabbath the citizens of Jerusalem would repair to this mountain of the Temple and seat themselves between the two gates, in order to tender their congratulations to the bridegrooms and their condolences to the mourners.

B. The Jewish traveler Rabbi Pethahiah, who visited Jerusalem in the year 1187, relates the following:

"At Jerusalem there is a gate, and its name is the Gate of Mercy. The gate is full of stone and lime. No Jew, and still less a Gentile, is permitted to go there. One day the Gentiles wished to open this gate, but the whole of Palestine shook from one end to the other, and there arose a great tumult in the city until they left off. There is a tradition amongst the Jews that the Divine Presence first appeared through this gate, and that by the same gate the Divine Presence will return. When the Resurrection comes, those who arise will see distinctly the Eternal Spirit returning to Zion through that gate, and therefore it is on this spot that prayers are offered."

C. In the olden days the two gates of mercy were covered and surrounded by heaps of debris and dust, and appeared to be sunk in the ground. Jewish medieval pilgrims who came here to pray and saw these sunken gates used to say, these are the gates which are mentioned in the Book of Lamentations: "Her gates are sunk into the ground!"

The Jewish pilgrim Rabbi Isaac, the son of Musa, writes in 1541 to his father about the Gate of Mercy: "Every king who rules in Jerusalem digs around these two gates, but the more he digs the deeper they sink into the ground, and when he stops digging, the gates return to their former position."

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### III. ANCIENT AND MODERN JERUSALEM

“JERUSALEM IS THE JEWEL OF THE  
LAND OF ISRAEL.”

“WHOEVER HAS NOT SEEN JERUSALEM  
IN ITS GLORY HAS NEVER SEEN A  
DELIGHTFUL CITY.”



## 18. THE ANCIENT JERUSALEM

A. The Sages of Israel said: There are ten measures of beauty in the universe, nine belong to Jerusalem, and one to the rest of the world. Whoever has not seen Jerusalem in her glory has never seen a beautiful city in his life (see Fig. 6a).

There were four hundred synagogues in Jerusalem and each one had its school for Bible and Talmud.

Jeremiah the prophet was wont to prophesy in the market places, Zephaniah in the synagogues, and Huldah the prophetess among the women of Israel.

There were ten markets in Jerusalem and each of them was distinct and separate. There was a market for royalty, a market for the prophets, and one for the kings of Judea; a market for the members of the Sanhedrin, one for the high priests and one for the righteous; a market for the Nazirites, for the Pious Men (*hasidim*), for the tribe of Judah, and for the guards of the Temple.

B. In Jerusalem there was a stone, known as the "Stone of Inquiry" (*Eben ha-To'im*), on which all lost property was deposited, so that those who happened to lose anything knew where to go and inquire after their loss, which on their giving proof of their identity was returned to them.

Outside Jerusalem there stood the lodge of accoun-

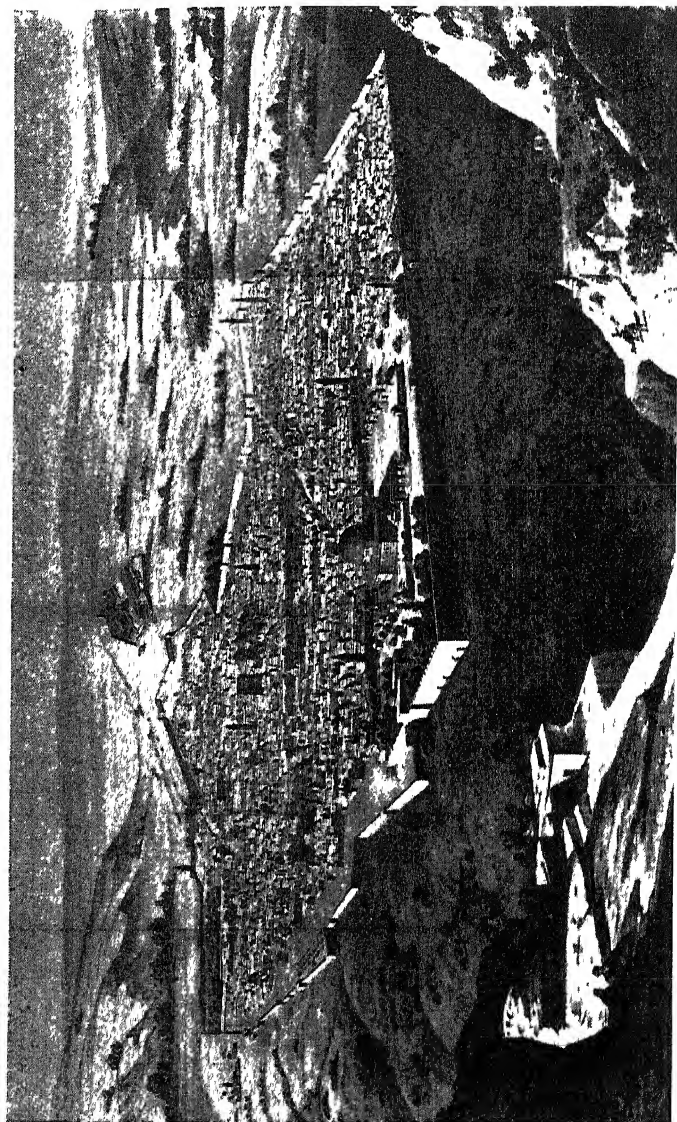


Fig. 6a: General View of Jerusalem (1867)

tants and all who had accounts to render or business to transact would repair to it. This lodge of accountants was placed outside Jerusalem, because of the words in the Psalms: "In the city of our God, in the mountains of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the *joy* of the whole earth, is Mount Zion," and how could anyone whose heart is troubled with cares of business be regarded as joyous?

C. Certain customs were peculiar to Jerusalem. A man invited to a meal turned up one of his sleeves as a sign that he had received the invitation.

A flag would be displayed at the door of a house where a feast was being held, and after it had been taken away no one might enter.

If a man commissioned his neighbor to prepare a dinner for him and he spoiled it, he was obliged to pay two fines; one for the shame he caused to the master of the house, and the other for the shame to which he put the guests.

The children of Israel never had such joyous days as the fifteenth of the month Ab and the Day of Atonement. For on these days the sons of Jerusalem used to go out dressed in white garments, which they borrowed from one another in order not to cause shame to him who had none of his own . . . The daughters of Jerusalem, too, used to go out on these days and dance in the vineyards saying: Young man, lift up thine eyes, and consider whom thou wilt select for thyself as a



wife: do not fix thine eyes upon beauty, but consider the family!

D. Various things are said about Jerusalem: There was no appearance of plagues in a house at Jerusalem.

Projecting cornices and balconies were not allowed to be built in the city.

Limekilns were not permitted to be erected there.

No refuse heaps were allowed in any quarter.

No cocks were reared in Jerusalem.

No corpse ever remained over night within its walls; the burial had to take place on the day of decease.

No orchards or gardens were permitted excepting certain rose gardens, which had been there from the times of the earlier prophets.

On each side of Jerusalem there was a vineyard, extending a day's journey in every direction.

Several miracles happened to the old inhabitants of Jerusalem.

No man suffered loss. No man suffered harm. No man stumbled. No fire broke out. No house collapsed. No man grumbled that his place was narrow. No man died from the bite of a scorpion or snake.

E. A moslem Judge by name Mujir al-Din, who lived in Jerusalem in the fifteenth century, tells a story that was related to him by a certain man, who said: "I read in an ancient book that in Jerusalem there are great deadly poisonous snakes . . . In a certain mosque which is called the Mosque of the Serpents, there are pillars of stone, on the tops of which are

carved figures of snakes, which are a charm against their bites. If a man is bitten within the borders of the city of Jerusalem he will not come to any harm, but if he has passed beyond the border, even by one hand-breadth, he will surely die. The bitten man is obliged to remain within the precincts of the city for 360 days, and if he goes forth even one day sooner, he will die."

## 19. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

There is no sorrow in the life of Israel like that of the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Holy Temple. On that day their national freedom was lost and the people commenced to count the new era of exile and suffering.

A. Why was Jerusalem destroyed?—asked the Sages of Israel. Jerusalem was destroyed only because of the desecration of the Sabbath. Jerusalem was destroyed only because the morning and the evening prayers were abolished. Jerusalem was destroyed only because the children of the schools remained untaught. Jerusalem was destroyed only because the people did not feel shame towards one another. Jerusalem was destroyed only because no distinction was drawn between the young and the old. Jerusalem was destroyed only because one did not warn or admonish the other. Jerusalem was destroyed only because men of scholarship

and learning were despised. Jerusalem was destroyed only because there were no longer men of faith and hope in her midst.

Other Sages of Israel said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because her laws were founded upon the strict letter of the Torah and were not interpreted in the way of mercy and kindness.

B. From the day that the Temple was destroyed, men of sound judgment were cut off. Confusion of thought prevailed, and the heart did not seek after purity but decided according to appearances. The shedding of blood profanes the holy soil and is an offence against the Divine Presence; it was because of the shedding of blood that the Holy Temple was burnt.

From the time that the Temple was destroyed, not a day passed without a curse. The rains dried up, and the dew did not yield its blessing; the fruits of the trees lost their taste, neither did they give forth nourishment. When the offering of the first fruits for the Temple was abolished, the fig tree ceased to blossom. When the offering of wine ceased, the vineyards refused to put forth their vines. When the burning of the holy oil ceased, the olive trees would no longer yield their oil.

C. When the Temple was destroyed, a number of Jews became Nazirites (hermits) and refused to eat meat or drink wine. Rabbi Hoshea came to them and said, "My children, why do you refuse to eat meat or

to drink wine?" They answered him, "How can we eat meat which once would have been sacrificed on the holy altar and which is sacrificed no longer! How can we drink wine which once would have been poured out on the holy altar and which is poured out no longer!"

The Lord said to Israel, "Ye have caused the destruction of My house, and the exile of My children. Pray that peace come back to Jerusalem and I will forgive you. For Jerusalem is the city of peace!"

## 20. THE MOURNING FOR JERUSALEM

A. The Sages of Israel taught: He who sees the cities of Judah in their desolation should say with the prophet Isaiah, "Thy holy cities are a wilderness,"—and rend his garments.

He who sees the city of Jerusalem in its desolation should say, "Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation,"—and rend his garments.

He who sees the Holy Temple in its desolation should say: "Our holy and beautiful house where our fathers praised Thee is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste," and rend his garments.

Rabbi Joseph Caro said: One rent should be made on seeing the cities of Judah, a second on beholding Jerusalem, and a final one on catching the first glimpse of the Temple. The formality should be carried out standing; it should be done with the hand; the rents

should be extended until the heart is laid bare; and they must never be sewed up again.

R. Simeon said to Rabbi Hiyya, "I am a donkey driver and come to Jerusalem very often. Must I rend my garments each time?" Rabbi Hiyya replied, "You need rend your garments only if you visit Jerusalem after thirty days' absence."

B. The story is told of four wise men who went up to Jerusalem. When they came to Mount Scopus, they saw the holy city and they rent their garments. When they came to Mount Moriah, they saw a fox come forth from the Holy of Holies and they began to weep. Rabbi Akiba who was with them laughed and asked his companions, "Why do you weep?" and they answered him, "How should we not weep, when this spot of which it is written in the Holy Law, 'If a stranger come unto it, he shall die,' hath become the habitation of foxes!" Rabbi Akiba said to them, "And I laughed because I remembered the words of the prophet Zechariah: 'Thus said the Lord, I am returned unto Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the "City of Truth," and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts the "Holy Mountain." There shall yet old men and women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls, playing in the streets thereof.'" And the men made answer, "Akiba, thou hast consoled us! Akiba, thou hast consoled us!"

C. He who mourns for Jerusalem will live to share

in her joy and he who does not mourn for Jerusalem, will not live to share in her joy. He who mourns for Jerusalem in this world will be found worthy to rejoice in the world to come.

The Lord will return to Jerusalem all her joy and gladness, and that joy and gladness will only be returned on the ninth day of the month of Ab, *Tish'ah be-Ab*, the day when the Temple was destroyed. To-day, the ninth of Ab is a day of mourning, but in the future, the Almighty will make it a holy day and a day of rejoicing to all Israel.

## 21. THE COMFORTING OF JERUSALEM

“The Lord will console thee, O Jerusalem, save in Peace.”

The Lord said to the prophets of Israel, “Go forth and console My city Jerusalem.” The prophet Hosea went to console her and he said to her, “The Lord has sent me to console thee,” and Jerusalem asked him, “Wherewith wilt thou console me?” He answered:

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, . . .

I will be as the dew unto Israel

He shall grow as the lily

And cast forth his roots as Lebanon!

Then came the prophet Joel with his consolation and said:

Then shall Jerusalem be holy

And there shall no strangers pass through her  
any more,

And it shall come to pass in that day

That the mountains shall drop down new wine

And the hills shall flow with milk.

Then came the prophet Amos and said:

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David  
that is fallen  
And close up the breaches thereof  
And I will raise up his ruins  
And I will build it as in the days of old.

Then came the prophet Micah and said:

Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth  
iniquity  
And passeth by the transgression of the remnant  
of His heritage,  
He retaineth not His anger for ever,  
Because He delighteth in mercy!

Then came the prophet Nahum and said:

Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that  
bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace.  
O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows,  
For the wicked shall no more pass through thee.

Then came the prophet Zephaniah and said:

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel;  
Be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter  
of Jerusalem,  
The Lord hath taken away thy judgements,  
He hath cast out thine enemy.

And so all the prophets returned to the Lord with words of consolation upon their lips, and said, "Lo and behold, Thy city Jerusalem refuseth to be consoled."

And the Lord answered them, "You and I will go forth together so that we may console her, with the words:

Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your  
Lord,  
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry  
unto her,  
That her warfare is accomplished,  
That her iniquity is pardoned!"

## 22. THE ETERNAL JERUSALEM

“Eternity, thy name is Jerusalem.”

A. The ancients believed that not only on the face of this earth there is a Jerusalem but also in heaven there is such a city, called by the Hebrews: *Yerushalayim shel Ma'alah*—Jerusalem of the Upper World.

Also in the Upper Jerusalem there is a Temple, and when the high priest of Israel entered the Temple on Mount Moriah and offered sacrifices and incense, the archangel Michael entered the heavenly Temple and offered sacrifices and incense.

Everyone who wishes can come to Jerusalem on earth but not to Jerusalem in heaven. Here enter only those who are invited. When Moses was taken by the angel, God opened before him the seven heavens and showed him Jerusalem with its Temple.

The church father Tertullian who lived in the second century, writes about the divinely built city of Jerusalem which is in heaven: “It is evident from the testimony of even heathen witnesses that in Judea there was a city suspended in the sky early every morning for forty days. As the day advanced, the entire figure of the walls would wane gradually, and sometimes it would vanish instantly.”

B. In the end of time, Jerusalem will spread over the whole of *Erez Israel* and *Erez Israel* will spread over the whole world.



And how shall the people come from all corners of the earth and pray in Jerusalem? The clouds of the heavens will carry them to Jerusalem every first day of the month and every Sabbath, and bring them back to the places whence they came. This it is for which Isaiah the prophet praises them and says: "Who are these that fly as a cloud?"

In the end of time, Jerusalem will spread forth in all directions, and all the children of Israel will return from exile and find rest and peace within her borders.

C. Jerusalem will not be rebuilt in its entirety till all the children of Israel will be gathered from exile . . . as it is written in the Psalms: "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem. He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel."

Above Mount Moriah, the Temple of the Lord will again appear formed from precious stones and pearls. The Lord will increase Jerusalem a thousandfold and will build within her twelve hundred thousand towers and plant upon her soil one hundred and sixty-nine thousand gardens.

D. The Almighty will surround Jerusalem with seven walls; a wall of silver and a wall of gold; a wall of precious stones and a wall of lazulite; a wall of sapphire, a wall of emerald and a wall of fire; and its brilliant splendor will radiate to the four corners of the globe.

The borders of Jerusalem in the future will be full of precious stones and pearls, and all Israel will come and take what they please, for in this world Israel marks

his boundaries with common stones, but in the world to come they will mark them with precious stones and pearls.

E. In the end of time, the Almighty will provide a great feast for the righteous from the flesh of the Leviathan, and the remains of that feast will be sold in the markets of Jerusalem.

In the end of time, the Almighty will build a great tabernacle for the righteous from the skin of the Leviathan and that which remains will adorn the walls of Jerusalem so that its brilliant splendor will radiate to the four corners of the globe.

In the end of time, Jerusalem will become the metropolis for all lands. In the end of time, Jerusalem will be a shining light to all the nations of the earth, who will walk in its brightness.

## 23. THE KEYS OF JERUSALEM

The Arabs are aware that God said to Abraham: "Unto thy seed will I give this land," and repeated the promise several times to him and to Isaac and Jacob. So sincerely do the Arabs believe this, that they keep a jealous watch over the tombs of these three patriarchs at Hebron, to prevent the Jews from approaching and obtaining them as intercessors with God to restore to them their country. Every Mohammedan also knows that Jerusalem once belonged to the Hebrews, and was taken from them as a punishment . . .

In July 1861, on the day on which the news of the death of Abd-ul-Mejid, the Sultan of Turkey, and the accession of Abd-ul-Aziz, reached Jerusalem, the Jews waited with all formalities on the Governor, Surraya Pasha, and requested him to restore to them the keys of Jerusalem, according to a right which they claimed on the death of one Sultan and the accession of another. At the same time they brought forward such proofs of the justice of their demands that the Pasha did not refuse but referred their request to his ordinary council, consisting of the chief officer of religion (the Mufti), the chief judge (the Kadi) and other persons of distinction, natives of the country. Their decision was in favor of the Israelites, the whole council being aware that they were the ancient owners of the country.

The ceremony was accordingly performed in the following manner. Sayd Pasha, the General of the forces, accompanied by the officers of his staff and some members of the council and followed by a crowd of sight-seers, went to the Jews' quarters, where he was met by a deputation of that nation and conducted to the house of the Chief Rabbi (Haham Bashi), who received the General of the forces at the door and there was publicly presented with the keys. The General was then entertained with the utmost respect at the divan of the Rabbi. Refreshments, coffee and tobacco were served. And then the Rabbi, not having a garrison to defend Jerusalem, restored the keys with many thanks to the General, who was escorted back by the

chief men of the Jews to the Governor of the City, Surraya Pasha, to give him an account of his mission and show him that none of the keys were missing.

## 24. THE SYNAGOGUE OF ELIJAH

"Happy is he whoever saluted Elijah  
And the salutation was returned."

In the Jewish quarter of the old Jerusalem there are four synagogues built together under one roof. These are most holy in the eyes of the Sephardic Jews.

One of these synagogues is called after the prophet Elijah because of a certain happening. Many centuries ago there was a very small Jewish settlement in Jerusalem, consisting of only nine men all told. Once when they gathered together on the eve of Atonement (*Yom ha-Kippurim*), there was no person to complete the *Minyan* (the required quorum of ten). The day was already late, when suddenly there entered an old man, weary and covered with dust, and looking as if he came from a great distance. The men rejoiced on seeing him, gave him the seat of honor, and began the service. When they ended the service next day each turned to the old man to invite him home for supper, but he was nowhere to be found. Then they understood that it was Elijah the Prophet who had come to complete their *Minyan*, and they called the synagogue by the name of Elijah.

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When you visit the synagogue, you will find a little nook in which is Elijah's seat (see Fig. 7). On the lintel of the nook is written: "There is a tradition that Elijah the Prophet, may his memory be blessed, revealed himself here."<sup>1</sup>

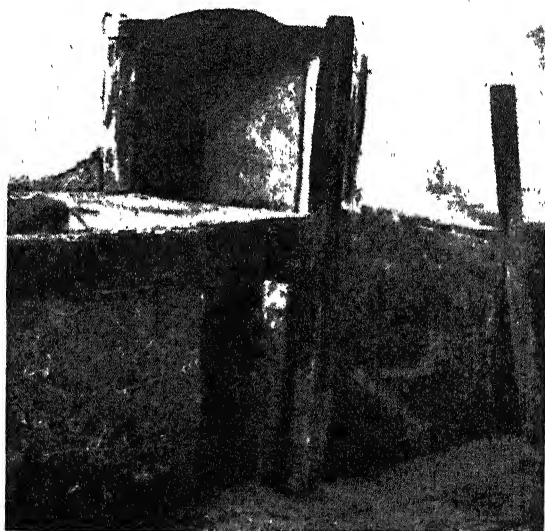


Fig. 7: Here Appeared Elijah the Prophet

<sup>1</sup> Elijah is believed to appear even now, especially at a circumcision when a chair, "*Kise shel Eliyahu*"—The Throne of Elijah—is set for him to occupy. He is also expected on the first night of the Passover, when the largest cup, filled to the brim with wine, which is called *Kos shel Eliyahu*, the cup of Elijah, is specially set on the table in honor of the Prophet.

## 25. THE SYNAGOGUE OF JOHANAN

"All the synagogues will in future be transferred and find a permanent place in the Land of Israel."

A. In the old Jerusalem near the synagogue of Elijah is the synagogue of Rabbi Johanan ben Zaccai. (See Fig. 8). According to tradition this learned Rabbi who was the father of wisdom in the last years of the

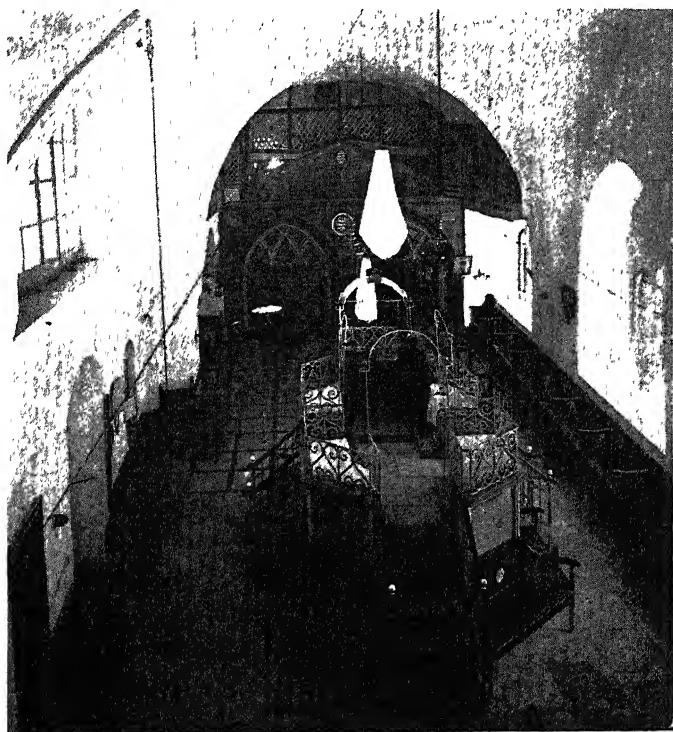


Fig. 8: The Synagogue of Rabbi Johanan

second Temple, used to pray on this spot. (See Leg. 112). In the southern wall of the synagogue, below the ceiling, there is a tall lattice, on which lies a big ram's horn (*Shofar*) and a vessel containing olive oil.

Tradition says that both the horn and the oil came from the Temple; and woe betide the man who dares to lay hands on them, for he will not live the year out.

When the building is cleaned and whitewashed, and the builders have to move the sacred vessels, the *Shofar* and the oil, they must first go and dip themselves in running water to be ritually clean. When Elijah will appear in the latter days—may they come speedily and in our time, Amen—he will take this horn to proclaim our freedom, and he will use the oil for the everlasting light of the Almighty.

B. The Sages of Israel say: The limbs of the great ram, which, according to tradition, was created in the first six days of the creation of the world, were used for various holy purposes and not one of these limbs was permitted to be wasted. His ashes formed the foundation of the holy altar of the Temple; his veins formed the ten strings of the harp of King David; from his hide Elijah made the girdle for his loins; his left horn was the *Shofar* blown on Mount Sinai, and his right horn, which is still larger, will be used as the trumpet of Elijah to herald the coming of the Messiah, as the prophet Isaiah said: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown." (Leg. 197).

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## 26. THE SYNAGOGUE OF BETHEL

In the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, opposite the Synagogue of Johanan ben Zaccai, there stands a little synagogue known as Bethel—the House of God. Here the Cabalists of Jerusalem come together and devote themselves to the study of the mystic secrets of the law. Once the place used to be crowded with the great amongst the Cabalists, but now there are but few who congregate in its midst. To this day, however, the cry is repeated: "Oh! how great and fearful is this holy place, where the lions of learning dwelt in all their glory!"

This holy synagogue was once the abode of Shalom Sharabi, the great Yemenite Rabbi who lived in Jerusalem in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was he who instituted the new system of prayer, set forth in the prayer book *Nehar Shalom*—the River of Peace.

From this synagogue Rabbi Sharabi was wont to go to the Western Wall (*Kotel ha-Ma'arabi*) alone every night and there repeat the wailing prayer of mourning for the destruction of the Temple and the desolation of Israel.

One night, as he wept bitterly and raised his voice loud in prayer, he awoke his neighbors who in their anger threatened to fall upon him and destroy him. But they had scarcely lifted up their hands against him, when the fear of the Lord came upon them, and



they became like pillars of stone without being able to move hand or foot. The Rabbi continued his prayer, completed it, and then passed by them as he returned to his home. When the friends and relatives of the stricken men saw this, they went to Rabbi Sharabi, prostrated themselves before him and said, "Grant pardon unto them, thou holy man of God." Rabbi Sharabi forgave them, and their strength and vigor was restored to them.

IV. THE WAILING WALL OF THE JEWS

IT WAS DECREED BY HEAVEN:  
THE DIVINE PRESENCE HAS NEVER  
DEPARTED FROM THE WAILING WALL!  
THE WAILING WALL MAY NEVER BE  
DESTROYED!



## 27. THE EVERLASTING WALL

“Although the Temple is in ruins God has not departed therefrom.”

The Wailing Wall of the Jews is the only remains of the wall which surrounded the Temple on Mount Moriah. The Jews call it: *Kotel ha-Ma'arabi*—the Western Wall, because it is a part of the western wall. For many generations Jews from all the corners of the world have come here, the sad relic of departed glory, to mourn for the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and to pray for their restoration. *Kotel ha-Ma'arabi* is called also the Wall of Weeping or the Wall of Tears.

It is related: “At the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, four commanders were each given a wall of the Temple to destroy. Three of the walls were destroyed, but the fourth commander failed to carry out the instructions, and to destroy his part. When Caesar reproved him, the commander replied, ‘Had I destroyed my wall as the others did, none of the nations coming after you could have known how glorious was the work that you have destroyed, O Caesar; but as this wall is left standing, succeeding generations will be able to gaze upon it and say, See what a glorious thing Caesar conquered and destroyed!’”

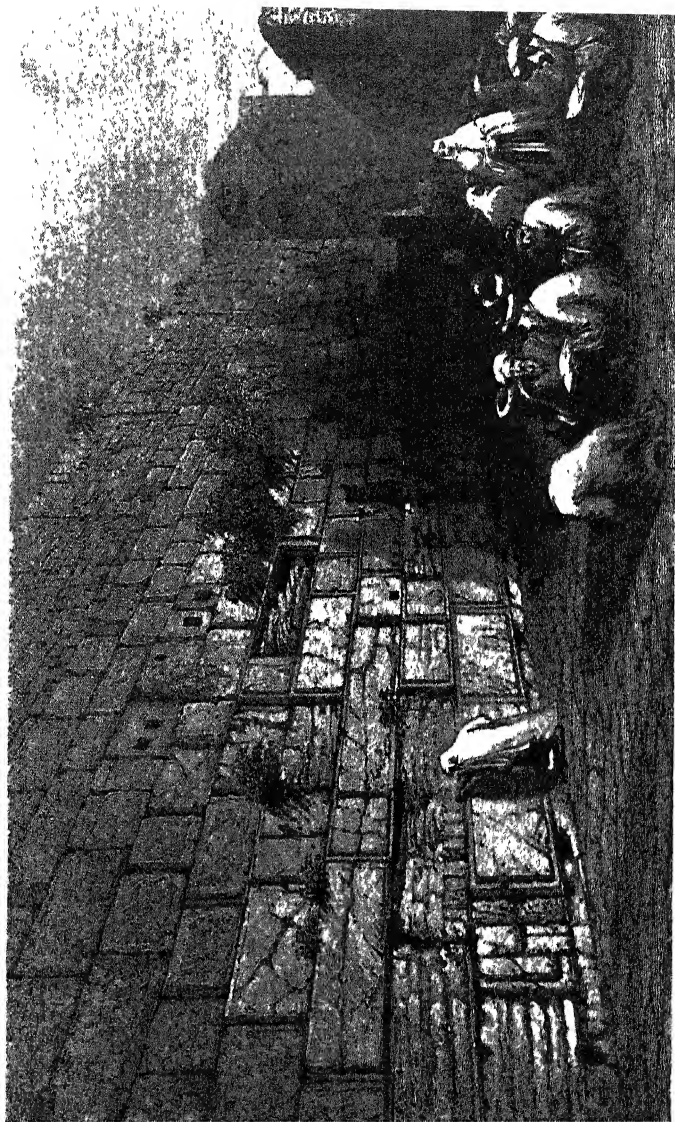


Fig. 8a: The Wailing Wall of the Jews (1849)

## 28. HOW THE WALL WAS DISCOVERED

A. The Jewish traveler, Rabbi Isaac Heilo, writes in the year 1333: "Within the area where the Holy Temple once stood, there now rises a Mosque, erected by the Arab King who conquered Palestine from the Christians. This king declared on oath that should he succeed in conquering Jerusalem he would restore the ruins of the Temple. When, eventually, God put the Holy City into his hands, he asked the Jews to direct him to the ruins. The Christians, however, owing to the hatred they bore towards the Jews, had hidden the remains beneath heaps of rubbish so that no sign of them was visible.

"At this time there lived an old man who said to the King: 'I will tell you where the Temple lies, but I want you to swear that you will leave us the Western Wall (the Wailing Wall).' The King having given his promise, the old man showed him the ruins hidden under the accumulated rubbish. The King then ordered the place to be cleared, he himself helping, until the area was quite clear. Then he built a magnificent Mosque and left the Western Wall for the Jews, who resorted there to pray."

B. Rabbi Eliezer Nahman Puah (ca. 1540) relates the following: I have been told that in the day of Sultan Suleiman the site of the Temple was not known, and the Sultan had every corner of Jerusalem searched for it. One day the man in charge of the

work, despairing after much searching and inquiring in vain, saw a woman coming with a basket of garbage and filth upon her head. He asked her: "What are you carrying on your head?"—And she replied: "Garbage."

"And whither are you carrying it?"

"To such and such a place."

"Where do you live?"

"In Bethlehem."

"Is there no dunghill between Bethlehem and this place?"

"It is a tradition among us that whoever takes a little garbage to that place performs a meritorious act."

The curiosity of the officer was aroused and he commanded a great number of men to remove the garbage from that place, which lower down had mouldered to dust with age; and the holy site was revealed to his gaze. And when the Sultan learned of this, he rejoiced greatly and ordered the place to be swept and sprinkled and the Wailing Wall washed with rose-water . . .

## 29. THE SULTAN AND THE WALL

Moses Hagiz, a famous Rabbi in Jerusalem in the seventeenth century, tells an interesting story, in the form of a riddle, about the Turkish conquest of Jerusalem and the discovery of the Wailing Wall, which he heard from the Moslems, who are familiar with the history of the Ottomans, that is, the Turks.

“Three hundred years before the Sultan Salim conquered Jerusalem, there arose an astrologer who predicted this conquest in the following words: When the letter *S* is inserted into another letter *S*, then the first *S* will conquer a double *S*.

“The people did not understand this, and only after three hundred years, when Sultan Salim conquered Palestine,<sup>\*</sup> did the prophecy of the astrologer become clear. He said: ‘When the letter *S*, that is, Salim, is inserted into another letter *S*, that is, after three hundred years (in Hebrew = *Shelosh meot*), the first *S*, that is Salim, will conquer a double *S*; namely, he will conquer the cities of Damascus and Jerusalem.’”

One day when Sultan Salim was in Jerusalem, he saw an old Christian woman who brought a mass of ordure and cast it upon a spot near his palace. Growing exceeding wroth, he sent one of his men to bring the woman before him. The woman excused herself, saying that she lived two days’ journey from Jerusalem and had come in obedience to the bishops, who had ordained that a mass of ordure be brought once in thirty days and cast on the spot where the House of the God of Israel had formerly stood. If they could not destroy it in its entirety, they wished it to be swamped and forgotten.

The Sultan on inquiry found that she spoke the truth. So he took many coins of gold and silver and, with

<sup>\*</sup>The Sultan Salim I visited Jerusalem on December 31, 1517, immediately after the Turkish conquest of the Land.



basket and shovel in hand, issued the following proclamation to his people: "Whosoever loveth the king and desireth to give him pleasure, let him see his actions and do likewise." Going to the dunghill the Sultan threw into different parts of it many purses of coins so that the poor might dig away the rubbish in order to find the treasure. And the Sultan himself stood by them, urging them on. Finally more than 10,000 men worked for thirty days till the dunghill was completely removed, and the *Kotel ha-Ma'arabi*, the Wailing Wall, stood revealed as it is seen today.

### 30. THE WALL AND THE DIVINE PRESENCE

A. The Divine Presence rests eternally upon the Wailing Wall, hovering in hidden and mysterious waves.

Once Rabbi Nathan entered into the Temple precincts and found the whole Temple destroyed except for one wall, which was still standing. He asked what that wall was, and some one said to him: "It is the Western Wall (*Kotel ha-Ma'arabi*) where the Divine Presence still rests. I will prove it to you if you like." The man took a ring and fixed it on the wall and the ring started to sway to and fro . . . And Rabbi Nathan saw the Almighty, blessed be His name, bowing down and mourning . . .

Only very few people were worthy of seeing the Divine Presence over the Wailing Wall. It is said that the Divine Presence was revealed also to David Ben

Zimra (Ridbaz), the well-known Rabbi of Safed who lived in the sixteenth century.

B. Rabbi Abraham, the son of Eliezer Berukim (Sayer of Benedictions), who lived in Safed in the sixteenth century, was a pious and righteous man. On the stroke of midnight he would walk round all the streets in which the Jews dwelt and would cry in bitter tones: "My brethren of the House of Israel, know ye not that for our sins the Divine Presence disappeared, our Holy Temple was burned down, Israel is in bitter exile suffering the pangs of sorrow, many pious ones are massacred, men and women, young and old? And you lie on your beds in peace and safety! Rise, and let us cry unto the Lord, our God, who is ever gracious and merciful so that He may hearken unto our prayers and take pity upon His people, the last remnants of Israel!"

And Rabbi Abraham kept on crying, giving no rest to the dwellers in the town, until they all gathered in the synagogue and prayed and devoted themselves to the study of the Holy Law, and some delved deeply into the mysteries of the Cabala till the dawn of the day.

Rabbi Abraham excelled them all in his devotion to God. The Holy ha-Ari, the Lion of the Cabalists, wondered at his pious devotion, saying, "This man, Rabbi Abraham, is possessed of the soul of Jeremiah the great Prophet."

Once the Holy ha-Ari said to Rabbi Abraham, "Know that your days are numbered and that you will



Fig. 8b: The Prayer before  
the Wailing Wall

soon die if you will not do what I tell you, but if you do, you will live yet another 102 years, and this is what I bid you do. Go to Jerusalem and pour out your prayers before the Wailing Wall and you will prove yourself worthy by seeing the Divine Presence there."

Rabbi Abraham went home, shut himself in his house for three days and three nights, clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes and fasted the whole time. Then he went forth to Jerusalem, stood before the Wailing Wall in prayer, deep meditation and weeping. The image of a woman, clad in black, appeared to him on the face of the Wall. Immediately in great fear he fell upon the ground. Tearing his hair he cried in a loud voice, "Woe is me, what have I seen?"

Finally he fell in a deep slumber and in a dream the Divine Presence appeared to him, clad in fine raiment, and said to him: "Console thyself, My son Abraham, there is yet hope for thee, and the children of Israel will return to their inheritance and I will have mercy upon them."

He arose and returned to Safed, and when ha-Ari saw him, he said to him at once, "Now I know that you have seen the Divine Presence and you can rest assured that you will live another 102 years . . ."

### 31. THE WALL OF THE POOR

When Solomon wished to build the Temple in the holy city of Jerusalem, an angel of God appeared to him and said: "Solomon, son of David, King of Israel,

since thou dost know that the Temple which thou wilt build Me will be the holy place of the people, the portion of all Israel, summon all Israel and let each man take part in the work, each one according to his capacity."

So King Solomon sent forth and summoned assemblies of his people Israel, and not one man was missing. There came the princes and the rulers, the priests and the nobles, as well as the needy and the poor. And Solomon cast lots for the labor, for everything was apportioned by lot. And the lots fell in this manner: to the princes and rulers, the cupolas of the pillars and the steps; to the priests of Aaron's seed and to the Levites, the Ark of the Testimony and the curtain which is upon it; to those mighty in wealth, the eastern side; and to the poor and the needy, the Western Wall. Thus were the lots cast and since it came from the Lord, may it be for ever a wonder in our eyes!

Then began the labor for the House of God.

The princes and rulers and all the rich men of Israel took the golden earrings from the ears of their wives and their daughters, also all their jewels which were very precious; and they bought cedar wood wherewith to cover both the ground and the walls, and cypress wood for the doors, and olive wood for the lintels. Also day-laborers did they hire from the Sidonians and Tyrians and others of the heathen who dwelt in the land; and over them they appointed foremen to urge them and press them on, saying, "Ye slackers, finish your work!"

Thus was speedily ended and completed the work of the princes and rulers and the mighty in wealth; also that of the priests of Aaron's seed and of the Levites according to their families.

Only the work of the poor was delayed exceedingly, for they could not bring fine things from afar; and the men, the women and the children hewed stone in the great cave which is the cave of Zedekiah, until by the toil of their hands they completed their portion, the Western Wall.

Now when the holy work was ended and the Temple stood upon its height, perfect in its beauty, the Divine Presence descended and rested upon it, and the Lord chose the Western Wall; for He said: "The toil of the needy is precious in My eyes and My blessing shall be upon it." And a holy Echo went forth, saying: "The Holy Presence shall never be removed from the Western Wall."

So when the enemy destroyed our House of Glory—speedily may it be builded and established in our days, Amen—the angels of the Most High descended and spread their wings over the Western Wall; and a holy Echo went forth, and proclaimed: "Never shall the Western Wall be destroyed."

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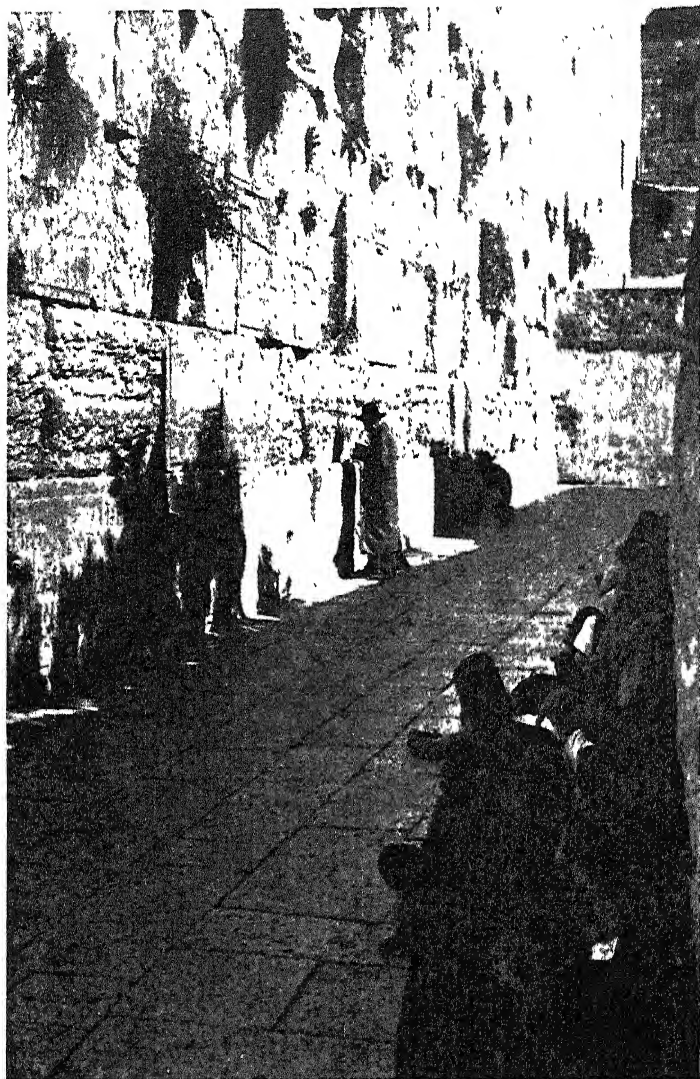


Fig. 8c: Poor People Near the Wailing Wall

If nowadays you go down through the narrow alleys which lead to the Wailing Wall, you will see the poor of Israel sitting there and asking for your alms; but they will say with pride: "Truly the Western Wall is the fruit of the toil of the needy, and only through their merit does it exist!"

### 32. THE WALL AND THE DOVE

A. It used to be said that on the eve of the ninth of the month of Ab (*Tish'ah be-Ab*), when the Jews lamented at the Wailing Wall for the destruction of the Temple, the sound of their weeping would cleave the heavens, and a white dove would appear in the darkness of the night and join the people of Israel in their mourning.

This is one of the lamentations recited by the Jews on the ninth day of Ab as they fast and pray before the Wailing Wall:

"On account of the Palace which is laid waste  
We sit solitary, and weep.  
For the sake of the Temple, which is destroyed,  
We sit solitary and weep.  
For the walls that are thrown down,  
We sit solitary and weep.  
For our glory, which hath departed from us,  
We sit solitary and weep.  
For our wise men, who have perished,  
We sit solitary and weep.  
For the precious stones, which are burnt,  
We sit solitary and weep.  
For our priests, who have fallen,  
We sit solitary and weep.  
We implore Thee to have mercy on Zion,  
Re-assemble the children of Jerusalem.



Haste! Haste! O Redeemer of Zion,  
Speak in favor of Jerusalem.  
May beauty and majesty surround Zion.  
Turn with Thy clemency toward Jerusalem.  
Grant soon that royal power may shine upon Zion,  
Console us who weep over Jerusalem.  
May peace and happiness enter Zion,  
May the scepter of power turn toward Jerusalem!"

B. Rabbi Jose relates: "Once while on the road I entered a ruin in Jerusalem to pray. Thither came Elijah the Prophet, and waited at the door till I ended my prayers. Then he said, 'Peace be with thee, Master Rabbi!' I answered, 'Peace be with thee, my Master and my Teacher!' And he said, 'My son, why didst thou enter this ruin?' 'To pray,' was my reply; whereupon he asked, 'My son, what voice didst thou hear in this ruin?' And I answered, 'I heard a holy voice like unto that of a dove, which said:

"Woe is Me that I have destroyed My house  
And have burned My holy palace,  
And have scattered My children amid the  
nations!"'

### 33. THE WALL AND THE NAILS

From olden days Jews from all the corners of the globe have gathered at the Wailing Wall to bewail the destruction of the Temple and to pray for the rebuilding of their ancient homeland. The Jews were wont to fix nails in the crevices of the wall, in order to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah: "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place!"

And Ezra, who returned with the exiles from Babylon to restore Jerusalem, said before the Lord: "And now for a little space grace hath been shewn by the Lord our God, to give us a chance to escape, and to give us a *nail in His holy place*, that our God may lighten our eyes . . ."

To the words of Isaiah who said to the man Shebna who was 'over the house': "What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here?" the Sages of Israel added these words: "Exiled one, son of an exiled one! Which wall did you build here, which pillar did you erect here and which *nail* did you fix here?"

Rabbi Eliezer said: "A man should have a fixed nail or a peg in the synagogue!"<sup>1</sup>

### 34. THE BENT STONE

Near the Dung Gate of Jerusalem you will find a bent stone jutting out from the wall of the Mosque Al-Aksa. It looks like a broken arch. This arch was part of an ancient bridge leading from the Temple Mount to the Upper City. The bridge was broken down at the destruction of the Temple and only this

<sup>1</sup> A story is told about seven scholars of Israel who came to the Valley of the Pomegranate (*Bik'at Rimmon* in Galilee) in order to proclaim the calendar for the coming year. When they had finished, they wished to leave a memorial of their visit. They saw a marble rock, and each man took a nail and fixed it therein. As they did so, each nail miraculously penetrated the hard stone as though it had been dough. And this rock was called: *Kefa Mesamra*, the benailed rock.



Fig. 9: Robinson's Arch (The Bent Stone)

fragment remains. It is called "Robinson's Arch" after the well-known American investigator of Palestine (see Fig. 9).

The Jews of Jerusalem tell a different tale.

In the school of Solomon (*Midrash Shelomo*), which stood where the Mosque Al-Aksa is now built, Jewish scholars were once arguing about the law. In their argument a quarrel broke out between them with regard to a certain ruling. One sage, Rabbi Eliezer, who was in the right, rose and cried in anger, "You are wrong, the law is as I say! Let this tree be my witness!" And the tree uprooted itself. But his companions said: "The tree is an inadmissible witness." So Eliezer said: "The waters in the aqueduct will prove it!" And the waters of the aqueduct flowed backward. But his companions said, "The behavior of the aqueduct is valueless as evidence." Then the sage cried in yet greater wrath, "If the law be as I say, let the walls of the house of study prove it!" And the walls trembled and the stones shifted their position as though ready to fall.

According to Jewish tradition Robinson's Arch is one of the stones of the wall which shifted and bent during the dispute of the scholars.

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## 35. THE GATE OF LIONS

The Gate of Lions in the wall of Jerusalem is well known to all. It looks towards the Valley of Kidron and is opposite the mount of Olives. Two pairs of lions are carved on the lintels and from them the gate receives its name (see Fig. 10).

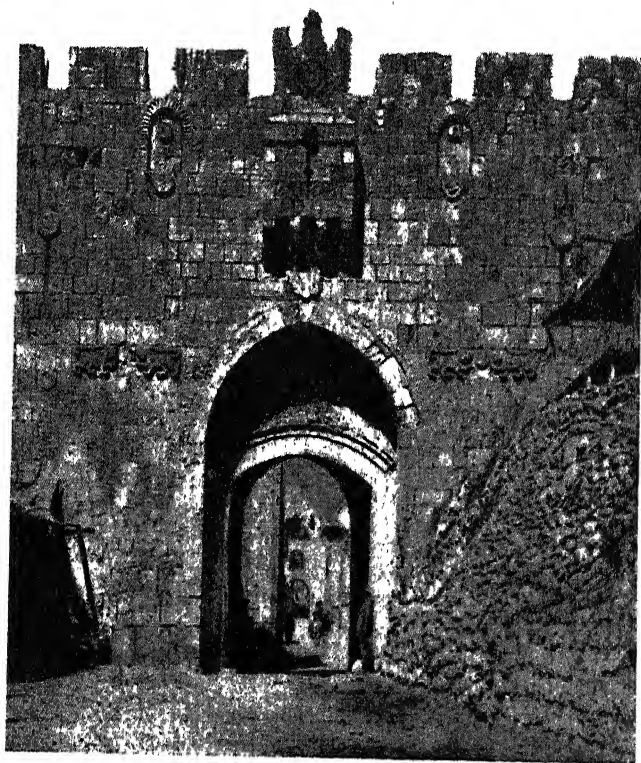


Fig. 10: The Gate of the Lions

When the Turkish Sultan Salim conquered Palestine, he oppressed the Holy City and set grievous taxes upon it; a poll-tax, a beast-tax and a house-tax. And the ruined and diminished city became very much impoverished. Finally the unfortunate dwellers could pay no longer. But the harsh king decided to punish them for not fulfilling his commands, and sought various plans in order to make them pay.

One night the Sultan dreamt that four fierce lions leapt upon him from the Jordan thickets and, seizing him in their jaws, were tearing him to pieces. The Sultan grew faint and cried aloud in fear and mortal anguish. Finally he woke in great trembling, his soul terrified.

When day dawned, he summoned all his wise men and interpreters of dreams and told them of his vision by night, asking them to explain the lions of his dream.

The fear of the king fell upon the wise men and they became so terrified that words failed them and they could say nothing. The king sat before them with angry face and gloomy eyes, awaiting their interpretation and threatening to slay them if they failed.

Then an old sheikh came forward and, kneeling before the king, said, "Let me summon courage enough to address my lord the king. If it seem good to the king, let him tell us of what he thought yesterday ere he slept and by Allah's aid we shall interpret the dream."

Then the Sultan told them that he had been consider-

ing an order to his officers that they should punish severely the men of Jerusalem, if they did not pay their taxes within a week.

Then the old sheikh said, "In the name of Allah the compassionate and merciful, know you that Jerusalem is sacred to Allah from all time; there did dwell his glory and there his chosen and anointed sat on the throne, David and Solomon and their descendants after them. Lions were engraved on their signet rings, and lions guarded their thrones as long as they held sway. And now, as you planned evil against this holy city, Allah sent the lions to destroy you! Therefore do you treat this holy city with goodness and mercy, that Allah's blessings find you; for if not, evil must befall the king."

So the Sultan decided to go to Jerusalem himself, in order to view it and know how to atone for his evil purposes. He came to Jerusalem and found its walls destroyed and its forts burnt, so he decided to build a new wall surrounding the city. He summoned two wise architects, together with a great number of slaves and stone-hewers and masons; and he set the architects over all, commanding them to beautify and adorn the wall.

The two architects divided the work between them and parted at the Lion Gate. One went north and built the wall opposite Mount Scopus, whence he passed by the cave of Zedekiah to the Shechem Gate and beyond. And the other turned south and built opposite Mount Olives, across Mount Zion and opposite the Valley of

Hinnom. And the work took seven years ere the two parties met by the Jaffa Gate where the wall was completed, and this is the wall which still surrounds the old city.

Then came the Sultan Salim with all his court to view the wall. He made a circuit of it, counting the towers and battlements and gazing upon its wonderful magnificences. When he came to the spot where the work began, he ordered a great gate to be made there with two pairs of lions upon it like the lions of his dream, that later generations might have a memorial of how Allah changed the king's heart regarding the Holy City, so that he raised it from its ruins and destruction.





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## V. GRAVES AND CAVES OF JERUSALEM

THE SAGES OF ISRAEL SAID:

"TO BE BURIED IN JERUSALEM IS LIKE  
BEING BURIED BENEATH THE THRONE  
OF THE LORD."

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### 36. THE TWO ARCHITECTS

When Sultan Salim had visited Jerusalem as well as the holy places and the wall which had been built by his command, he saw that the tomb of David was beyond the wall by Mount Zion. He summoned his two architects in anger and said, "Why was this holy tomb not included within the circuit of the walls?" And the architects answered: "Lord Sultan, we knew not that the tomb of David was sacred to Moslems, and therefore we left it out." The Sultan, very wroth at these two heretic architects, ordered them to be hanged.

And now when you enter the old Jerusalem by the Jaffa Gate, proceed a few paces and you will find on your left a small courtyard, with two tombstones in it. Here lie buried the two architects, whose names have been forgotten by all.

### 37. THE TOMB OF DAVID

"David, King of Israel, liveth and existeth!"

On Mount Zion, beyond the walls of Jerusalem, there is a group of domed chambers with a minaret rising above them (see Fig. 11). In one small chamber there is a monument swathed in a green curtain, which stands, according to tradition, on the grave of King David. The spot is sacred to the Jews who flock

thither in great numbers on the feast of Pentecost (*Shabuot*); for the tradition is that it was then that King David died.

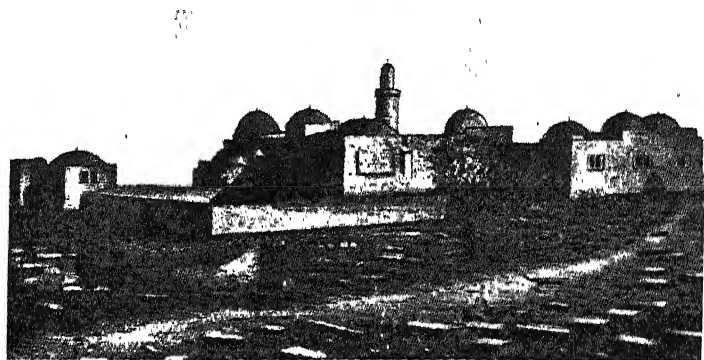


Fig. 11: The Tomb of David

How was this place discovered?

Laborers were once digging on Mount Zion and raised a stone slab, which covered the entrance to a cave. One of them then said to his mate, "Let us go in and see if there is any money in it." So they proceeded through the cave till they reached a great palace raised on marble pillars and inlaid with gold and silver; and sealed chests, containing no man knows what; within they discovered a table, a scepter and a crown all of gold, also the grave of David, King of Israel. That of King Solomon lay to the left, together with the graves of all the kings of Judah who were buried there. The two men rushed towards the palace, when a sudden gust of wind came from the mouth of the cave and

smote them so that they fell senseless to the earth and lay there till evening. Then came another wind crying with the voice of man, "Rise and go hence! for God doth not desire to show it to man!"

And so the graves of King David and the kings of Judah were revealed.

### 38. THE SWORD OF THE PASHA

Once the Pasha of Jerusalem came to visit the tomb of David. When he peered into the cave, his sword, set with pearls, slipped and fell into it. The Pasha ordered a certain Moslem to be lowered by a rope in order to bring up the sword; but all those who were lowered died within a few moments after being raised. The judge advised the Pasha to order the Jews to bring up the sword, for they would be respected by King David. The Jews cast lots and the lot fell upon the beadle of the community. He was let down and was speedily raised alive and holding the Pasha's sword in his hand. The beadle informed the Rabbi and his friends that when he was in the gloomy cave, a gray old man, clad in shining light, appeared to him, handed him the sword and then vanished.

### 39. THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS

Near the old city of Jerusalem, there is a fine burial cave which is attributed to the kings of Judea (See Fig. 12). Actually it is known to be the burial cave of

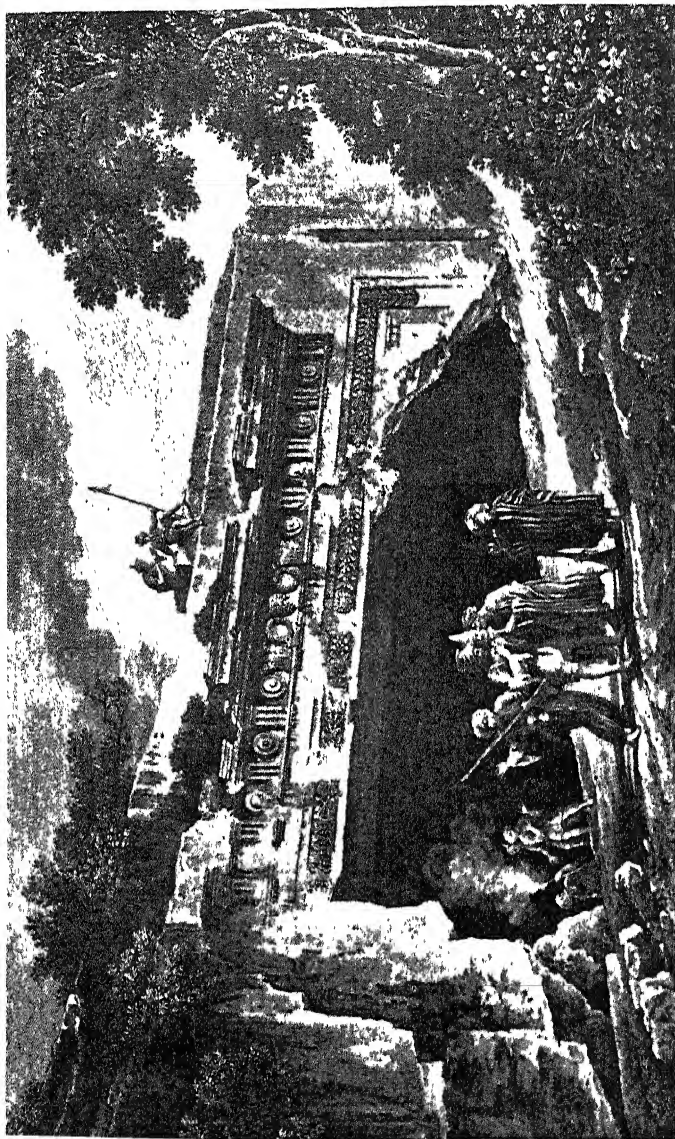


Fig. 12: Entrance to the Tombs of the Kings (1-72)

Queen Helena, who came with her children from her kingdom of Adiabene, a state in northern Mesopotamia, settled in Jerusalem and became a Jewess. It is said that the great building in the old city, now the Moslem Orphanage house, was the palace of Queen Helena. The street nearby is sometimes called in Arabic: '*Aḳabat al-Malikāt Helāni*, the ascent of the Queen Helena, or in short: '*Aḳabat al-Sitt*, the ascent of the Lady.

The Greek traveler Pausanias, who traveled also in Palestine in the second century, writes:

"Of the many wonderful graves that I know I will mention two, one at Halicarnassus, and one in the land of the Hebrews . . . In the city of Jerusalem, which the Roman Emperor razed to the ground, there is a grave of a native woman named Helen. In this grave there is a door, which, like the rest of the grave, is of stone, and is so contrived that it does not open except on one day of the year and at a certain hour; then it opens by its own mechanism, and after a short while shuts itself. At any other time you could not open it if you tried, though by using force you might break it down."

#### 40. THE CAVE OF KALBA SABBUA'

The Jews call the Cave of the Kings by the name of Kalba Sabbua', and say that it belonged to a wealthy man called Kalba Sabbua' who lived in Jerusalem at the time of the destruction of the second Temple. He



was very charitable and held open house for the poor and needy; if one went in ravenous as a dog (in Aramaic: *kalba*), he departed satisfied (*sabbua'*). And for this reason he was known as Kalba Sabbua'.

Rabbi Hayyim Hurwitz writes, in 1834:

"The cave of Kalba Sabbua' is most remarkable. Above the portal are hewn representations of grapes and circles like flat cakes. It is said that this is a memorial of the charity of Kalba Sabbua', who sustained with grapes and cakes of bread all those who entered his house (see Fig. 12a).

"The cave has a very narrow entrance and one has to scramble through on hands and knees. Within are many chambers, in one of which is the grave of Kalba Sabbua', and upon it rests a big slab. The slab is about six feet long and rounded on its upper side. Some wonderful artist has decorated it most beautifully.

"Once the heathen came and, greatly desiring this slab for their house of prayer, entered the cave and stole it. They set it on a high hilltop, but in the morning when they came to look for it, it was gone. They searched and searched, and at length found it precisely over the grave of the righteous Kalba Sabbua', whence they had stolen it.

"On two or three other occasions the same thing happened; and realizing then that they were powerless, they left it."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1867 scientific excavations were carried out in the cave of Kalba Sabbua' and the coffins as well as the slab were removed and taken to the museum of the Louvre in Paris.

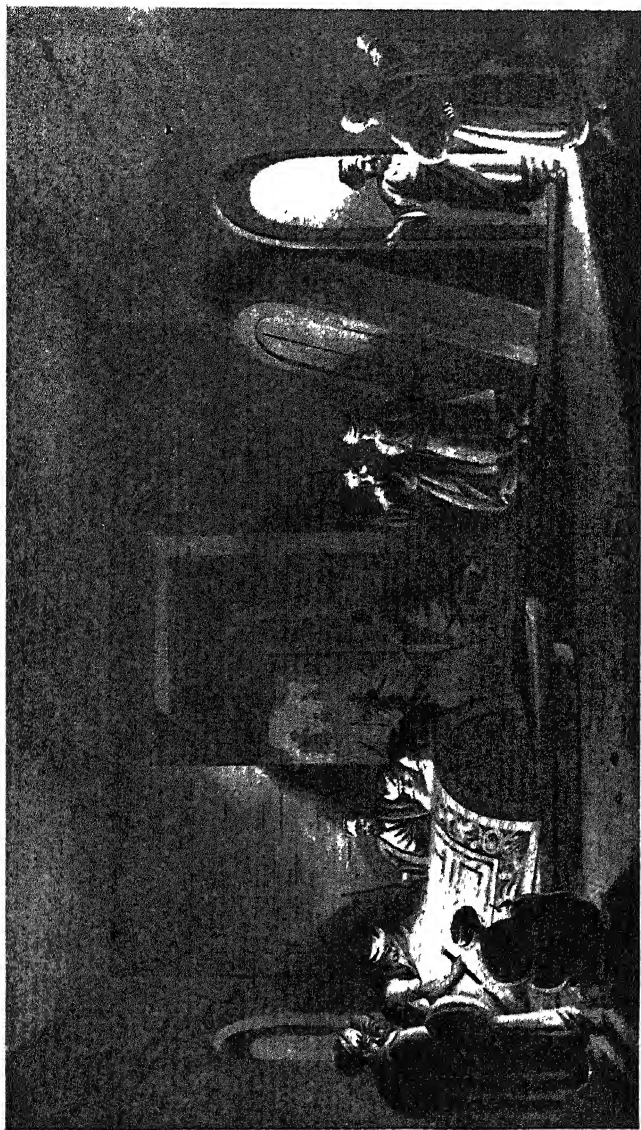


Fig. 12a: Arabs Searching for Treasures in the Tombs of the Kings (1800)

## 41. THE TREE OF ISAIAH

Isaiah the Prophet would walk through the courts of the Temple and the palaces, rebuking the kings of Judah. Manasseh the king grew wroth at his strictures and sent men to arrest him and cast him into the "Pit of the Transgressors."

Isaiah fled the city and a miracle occurred, for he was swallowed by the trunk of a tree and disappeared from his pursuers' sight; but the fringes of his praying shawl (*Talit*) were left visible. His pursuers seeing this, returned and told the king, who said, "Bring woodsmen and saw the tree asunder." They proceeded to do this and when the saw reached Isaiah's mouth, his soul departed and much blood flowed from the tree.

If you go down now to the brook of Kidron and turn to the Pool of Siloam, you will see a very old mulberry tree supported by a heap of stones (see Fig. 13). This tree is said to be the one which swallowed Isaiah, and it is therefore called by his name, and the men of Jerusalem revere it.



Fig. 13: The Tree of Isaiah

## 42. THE GRAVE OF KALONYMOS

Near the Pillar of Absalom, in the Valley of Kidron, there is a heap of stones which marks the grave of Rabbi Kalonymos Ba'al ha-Nes, the Man of the Miracle. The men of Jerusalem, when they passed by, used to cast a stone upon the heap in memory of what happened in his time.

One Sabbath eve, a little Christian girl, who had been killed, was thrown into the court of the great synagogue in Jerusalem. When the beadle came to open the synagogue in the morning, he found a large number of Christian priests gathered there, in great anger. So the beadle ran to the rabbi of the city, Rabbi Kalonymos, and told him what had happened.

When Rabbi Kalonymos reached the synagogue entrance, the priests attacked him with shouts and cries and accusations and cried, "Your hands have shed this innocent blood, which shall be avenged sevenfold!"

The Sabbath peace was destroyed. Sorrow and mourning filled the dwellings of the Jews. All the Christians in the city, man, woman and child, gathered together, led by the priests, and prepared to destroy the Jews.

Rabbi Kalonymos saw how great was the danger which hung over his community, and he resolved to avert it. So he went to the chief of the priests and spoke to him in this fashion: "I ask but one thing of you. Ere you execute vengeance upon us, gather yourselves

together for a little while in that holy place where the murdered girl was found." The chief of the priests agreed to this small request of the Jewish rabbi. And great numbers of Christians repaired to the synagogue, together with many Moslems who had come to see anything that might happen; and there was a great multitude of people!

The Rabbi wrote sacred and mysterious names and words on a sheet of parchment and placed the sheet on the dead girl's forehead. Suddenly the dead girl rose upon her feet, opened her mouth and said, "So and so, a Christian, saw me at such and such a place and murdered me for my jewelry. He is now hiding in his cellar." The chief of the priests could not believe his eyes or ears; he approached the girl and began questioning her closely and she answered each question to the point. He also sent to the Christian's house, where they found the girl's jewels and brought them to the synagogue, where all those assembled saw them.

They stared at each other in amazement. Then the chief of the priests rose and ascended the reader's platform, where he confessed his grievous error and craved the pardon of the rabbi and all his congregation, whom he cleared of all sin and iniquity. And the righteousness of the Jews shone as clearly as polished marble at noon, and they were delivered from dire distress. Everyone returned to his own habitation, where he finished the Sabbath day with rejoicing and psalm singing to the great Guardian of Israel.

But Rabbi Kalonymos left a will ere he died, in which we find the following:—

“Let each man who passes by my grave cast a stone or pebble thereon, in order that it may weigh heavy upon me, and that thereby my sin may be atoned for. For when I wrote on that Sabbath day, thereby saving many souls in Israel from slaughter, I committed a sin for which I should have been stoned according to our Holy Law.”<sup>1</sup>

### 43. THE CAVE OF SIMEON THE JUST

Simeon the Just used to say:

“The world is based on three things:

On the Torah, on service, and on charity.”

One of the spots held most sacred by the Jews of Jerusalem is the Cave of Simeon the Just (*Me'arat Shim'on ha-Zaddik*) which is found at the beginning of the Brook of Kidron, by the highroad which ascends Mount Scopus. In springtime, on the feast of *Lag ba-Omer*, multitudes of Jews come hither and joyfully while away their time in the shade of the olive trees.

A. Simeon the Just was a high priest in Jerusalem. It was he who went to meet Alexander of Macedon

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes when a bedouin passes by the burial place of a person dear to him, he can do him a favor by taking a pebble from his grave, saying: “I take this in order to lighten the soul of this man. May Allah have mercy on him.” (A. Musil)

when the latter passed through the Land of Israel.<sup>1</sup> It is told that he knew the day of his death beforehand, and informed the sages of this in the following words: "When I used to enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, an old man garbed in white would enter with me and go forth with me. But to-day an old man robed in black awaited me. He entered with me, but he did not come forth with me. Therefore I know that I shall shortly die."

B. Jerusalem once suffered a year of drought. The cisterns became dry and the inhabitants grew faint for thirst. The Moslems accused the Jews of bringing this misfortune upon them, saying that they wished to be revenged upon the Moslems. And the Governor of the city decreed: "Should no rain fall within three days, all the Jews will assuredly be expelled from the Holy City."

The Jews gathered at the synagogues and fasted and entreated the Lord to deliver them from the impending decree. Two days went by without a sign of rain, and the days were boiling hot. On the third morning the rabbi rose, gathered his congregation and told them to clothe themselves in their warmest winter garb. And the Jews went out through the gate of the city to pray at the Cave of Simeon the Just. The Arabs mockingly watched the Jews, dressed in their thickest winter attire in the fierce heat, and jeered at them.

The Jews came to the cave of Simeon the Just and prayed in deep bitterness of soul all that day. Just

<sup>1</sup>See: The Meeting at Antipatris, No. 123.



before evening the sky grew suddenly dark with clouds and they left the cave to hasten home. A heavy rain began to descend and drench the earth. They hurried to their houses but the rain soaked them through and through. And the Arabs came forth to meet them and honor them and looked upon the Jews as one looks upon a saint.

Since then the Arabs, too, honor the cave of Simeon the Just.

#### 44. THE TOMB OF SAMUEL

A. On the top of the highest mountain round Jerusalem there is a small village by the name of *Nabi Samuil*, called after the Prophet Samuel who was buried there. The Crusaders called this place "Mons Gaudi," mountain of joy, because it was from this place that they first caught sight of the Holy City and had great joy.

The tomb of Samuel is sacred to the Jews, who used to make pilgrimages thither. They came with scrolls of the Law and lighted candles, and went their way chanting songs and prayers. Sometimes a few became intoxicated and so profaned the holiness of the tomb. Therefore it was written on a special tablet in the synagogues of Jerusalem that "no one should go while intoxicated to the tomb of Samuel the Prophet, peace be upon him!"

B. A Moslem geographer, Al-Makdissi, wrote the following in the tenth century:

"I have heard my uncle relate that a certain Sultan had in mind to take possession of the Monastery of Samuel (*Dair Shamwil*) which is in a village lying about a league from Jerusalem. Said the Sultan to the owner of this village: 'Describe your country to me.' The man answered him: 'My village—may Allah give you aid!—is nigh unto the heavens, far above the plain. It is poor in soft herbage, rich in oats; hard bread do you eat there, and of crops you enjoy no profitable return. Tares and thistles abound, and even the almond tastes bitter. The peasant sows a bushel of corn and reaps but the same. This holy place, however, is well provided with pits.' The Sultan cried: 'Be off with you; we would have nought to do with your village'."

#### 45. THE CAVE OF ZEDEKIAH

A. When the King Nebuchadnezzar and his army entered the land of Judah and conquered Jerusalem, all the princes and priests fled thence; and Zedekiah, the King of Judah, in great fear, likewise wished to flee from the foe. But how could he flee when Nebuchadnezzar held all the roads?

His men told him, "Beneath Jerusalem is a great cave; there is a passage leading thence to the plains of Jericho. Let our lord the king flee that way." And Zedekiah entered the cave and pursued his path in dread fear almost to the plains of Jericho.

At the very time Zedekiah entered the cave, certain

of Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers went hunting in the plain of Jericho, and their quarry led them amid the bushes near the caves. At a certain passage they heard the sound of footsteps, and thinking to themselves that some fine game was approaching, they held themselves in readiness. But to their astonishment there stood before them Zedekiah, the King of Judah; so they seized him and brought him to the King of Babylon.

Since then this cave is called by the Jews *Me'arat Zidkiyahu*, the cave of Zedekiah. It is under the old city of Jerusalem and its entrance is near the Damascus Gate (see Fig. 14).

B. There were times when folks feared to enter Zedekiah's Cave, for many had lost their way there and never came out. But a certain man found a way out of the maze. What he did was to bring with him a ball of string and, tying one end to the entrance, he allowed the string to trail on the ground as he proceeded on his way. In this manner he thoroughly explored the cave and when he decided to return he wound up the string, following its trail till he reached the entrance in safety.



Fig. 14: The Cave of Zedekiah

## 46. THE SYNAGOGUE OF HA-RAMBAN

A. Near the grave of Simeon the Just there is a cave which is called by the Jews the Synagogue of ha-Ramban (*Bet ha-Keneset shel ha-Ramban*) (see Fig. 15). Ramban is composed of the initials of Rabbi Moshe Ben (the son of) Nahman. He came to Jerusalem in the year 1267 and found it desolate and in ruins. In a letter to his son he writes: "The blessing of God upon you, my son, and may you live to see the favor of Jerusalem and to behold your children's children. May your table be as full of blessing as was the table of our forefather Abraham. From Jerusalem, the Holy City, I am writing to you this letter. Praise and glory be to God my Creator that I was able to come here in peace. . . . Great is the desolation of the land . . . Jerusalem is the most desolate of all . . . But with all her desolation she finds favor in my eyes. There are two Jews here, brothers . . . On the Sabbath, about ten Jews used to gather together in their house to pray, but now we have found a ruined building with pillars of marble and a beautiful dome, which we have made into a synagogue. For the city is no man's property and whoever wishes to take possession of the ruins may do so."

B. Before the building of the synagogue, ha-Ramban used to pray and meditate in the cave which now bears his name, and when the Jews visited the holy places round the city, they used to pray at this cave.



Fig. 15: The Synagogue of ha-Ramban (1850)

The story is told that in Jerusalem there once lived a rich Jew who gave a great deal of charity to the poor. On the feast of Purim he gathered the needy and showered upon them many gifts. Once when he came to pray at the cave of ha-Ramban, a part of the roof fell in and the Jew was buried beneath it. It is related that every night of Purim there appears out of the debris of the cave a purse of gold from the treasures of this unfortunate benefactor.

No doubt some of the poor of Jerusalem steal forth in the dead of the night to seek this gold . . .

#### 47. THE CAVE OF THE LION

On the western side of old Jerusalem there is a Moslem cemetery which is known by the name of *Mamillah*. In the middle of this cemetery there is a pool called *Birkat Mamillah*, perhaps the same as the "Upper Pool" of the Bible. It is said that the Arabic name of Mamillah comes from the words *Ma' min-Allah*, water from God. Others say the cemetery is called Mamillah from the words *Ma-Aman-Allah*, with the security of God.

Close to this cistern there was a small cave known as the Lion Cave, in Latin: *caverna leonis*.

In a tract called *The City of Jerusalem*, which was written about the year 1187 C.E., occurs the following:—

"Outside the gate of David (Jaffa Gate) towards the west, there was a pool called the Pool of the Patriarch

(*Birkat Mamillah*), where they collected the waters from round about to water the horses. Near to this was a charnel ground called the Cemetery of the Lion. Now I will tell you why they called it so. It happened, as they say, that one day, long ago, a battle was fought here, between this burying-place and Jerusalem, in which a great number of Christians were killed, and those of the city were going to burn them all next day on account of the stench. A lion, however, came by night, and conveyed them all to this ditch. And there was a church here, where they prayed daily."

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## VI. ABOUT AND AROUND JERUSALEM

“IN THE END OF TIME JERUSALEM WILL  
SPREAD OVER THE WHOLE OF THE HOLY  
LAND, AND THE HOLY LAND WILL  
SPREAD OVER THE WHOLE WORLD!”

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## 48. THE PILLAR OF ABSALOM

To the east of Jerusalem, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, rises a beautiful stone monument which is known by the name of The Pillar of Absalom—in Hebrew: *Yad Abshalom* (see Fig. 16).

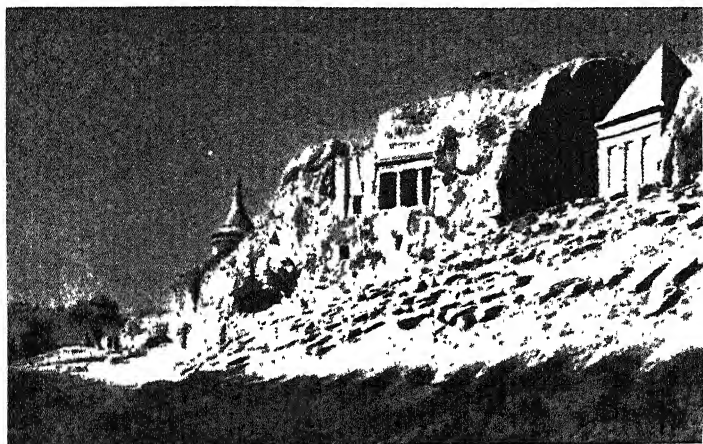


Fig. 16: The Pillar of Absalom

A. It is written in the Book of Samuel, "Now Absalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself the pillar which is in the king's dale, for he said: 'I have no son to keep my name in remembrance,' and he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called unto this day Absalom's Place."

On the pillar there is a carving of a half-opened flower which is slightly chipped. The Jews say that once a hand was carved above and for that reason the

monument was called in Hebrew: *Yad Abshalom*, the Hand of Absalom. It is related of a certain king who was besieging Jerusalem that he shot his arrows from the slopes of the Mount of Olives, and used the hand on Absalom's pillar as a target. After many failures he at last succeeded in striking down the hand, which fell and disappeared forever.

B. The Jews used to throw stones at this monument because of Absalom's rebellion against his father, King David (see Fig. 16a).



Fig. 16a: Throwing Stones on the Pillar of Absalom (1677)

The traveler Bernardin Surius, who visited the Holy Land in the year 1644, writes: "The Christians, Jews, Turks and Moors were wont to take their children to the Valley of Jehoshaphat and throw stones at the tomb (that is the Pillar of Absalom), bidding them do the same, and crying: Here he is! Here he is! the wicked cruel murderer, who made war against his father!"

C. The Arabs called Absalom's pillar *Tanturat Faron*, the hood of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Near the pillar there is a cave called by the Christians the Retreat of the Apostles. The Arabs called it *Diwan Faron*, the Divan of Pharaoh. The Jews call it: *Bet ha-Hofshit* (Fig. 16). "And Uzziah the King was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in *Bet ha-Hofshit* (the English version is the "several house") being a leper, for he was cut off from the House of the Lord."

Why was it called: *Bet ha-Hofshit*, The house of freedom?—Because here King Uzziah became free from his kingdom.

#### 49. THE MONUMENT OF ZECHARIAH

Near the Pillar of Absalom there is another stone monument which is known to the Jews as the tomb of Zechariah (see Fig. 16). "And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people and said unto them: 'Thus saith God: Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have

forsaken the Lord, He hath also forsaken you.' And they conspired against him and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord."

The pilgrim from Bordeaux who came to Jerusalem in the year 333 writes: "In the building itself where stood the temple which Solomon built, they say that the blood of Zacharias which was shed upon the stone pavement before the altar remains to this day. There are also to be seen the marks of the nails in the shoes of the soldiers who slew him, throughout the whole enclosure, so plain that you would think they were impressed upon wax."

The Arabs call the monument of Zechariah *Zaujat Faron*—the Wife of Pharaoh, and in the neighboring village, called Sillwan, there is another stone monument known as *Bint Faron*, the daughter of Pharaoh.

## 50. THE STONE OF HANINAH

Amid the mountains of Galilee, by the village of Arabah, which is in the valley of Zebulun, the shepherd Haninah, the son of Dosa, used to pasture his flock. He was famed far and wide for his great piety. Once he sat on a stone, his flock scattered around, and thought to himself, "All the men of the village take offerings up to the Temple, save me, poor shepherd that I am!" And he rose and said, "I dedicate to the house of our God this stone on which I sat and thought, and I myself shall take it thither."

So he hewed out the stone, shaped and polished it, and then cried joyfully, "Here is my gift. Now I must take it up to the city of my fathers." But the stone was far too heavy for him to carry alone, so he sought to hire laborers to aid him.

Five men chanced to pass by and he said to them, "Will ye carry this stone up to Jerusalem?" They answered, "Aye, for fifty dinars." But as he had no money wherewith to pay them, the men went their way.

Then the Holy One, blessed be He, sent five angels in the likeness of men to Haninah. And he said to them, "Will ye take this stone up to Jerusalem?" They answered, "For five dinars, if you but set your hand to aid us." He lent a hand and found them standing in Jerusalem with him; but when he desired to pay them they had disappeared.

The stone of Haninah used to stand in the forecourt of the Temple, but when one of the later Hasmonean monarchs wished to build a new wall to protect the Holy City, he took this stone as a foundation.

When you go north from the Damascus Gate of Jerusalem, you will see by the wayside a well-cut stone from the third wall. This is probably the stone of Haninah the son of Dosa, the Galilean shepherd.



## 51. THE FINGER OF OG, KING OF BASHAN

In the Russian quarter of Jerusalem, opposite the big church, there lies a stone pillar over twelve meters long (see Fig. 17). In former times this place was the



Fig. 17: The Finger of King Og

site of a quarry where pillars were hewed for various buildings. It seems that this pillar was prepared for Herod's temple but was broken and so was left by the masons where it now lies.

The children of Jerusalem say that this pillar is the petrified finger of Og, the giant King of Bashan, who was defeated by the tribes of Israel, when they conquered the land of Canaan.

In olden times also the stone which King Og wanted

to throw upon the children of Israel when they came to fight with him was shown, and the Sages of Israel said: "He who beholds this stone should give praise and glory unto his Creator."

Abba Saul related: I was a grave-digger: once I chased a deer which entered the thighbone of a skeleton. Along this thighbone I ran for a distance of three parasangs but did not reach the deer nor the far end of the thighbone. I understood the reason when I returned and was told that this was the skeleton of Og, king of Bashan.

## 52. THE FOUNTAIN OF GIHON

A. To the east of Jerusalem in the Valley of Kidron springs forth a fountain called by the Hebrews: *Ma'ayan ha-Gihon*—the gushing fountain (see Fig. 18). It is told that in the olden days when Adam lived on Mount Moriah, he used to bathe in this fountain.

Here Solomon was anointed king of Israel. So "Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet went down and caused Solomon to ride upon David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the Tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet and all the people said: 'God save King Solomon.' And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth was rent with the sound of them."

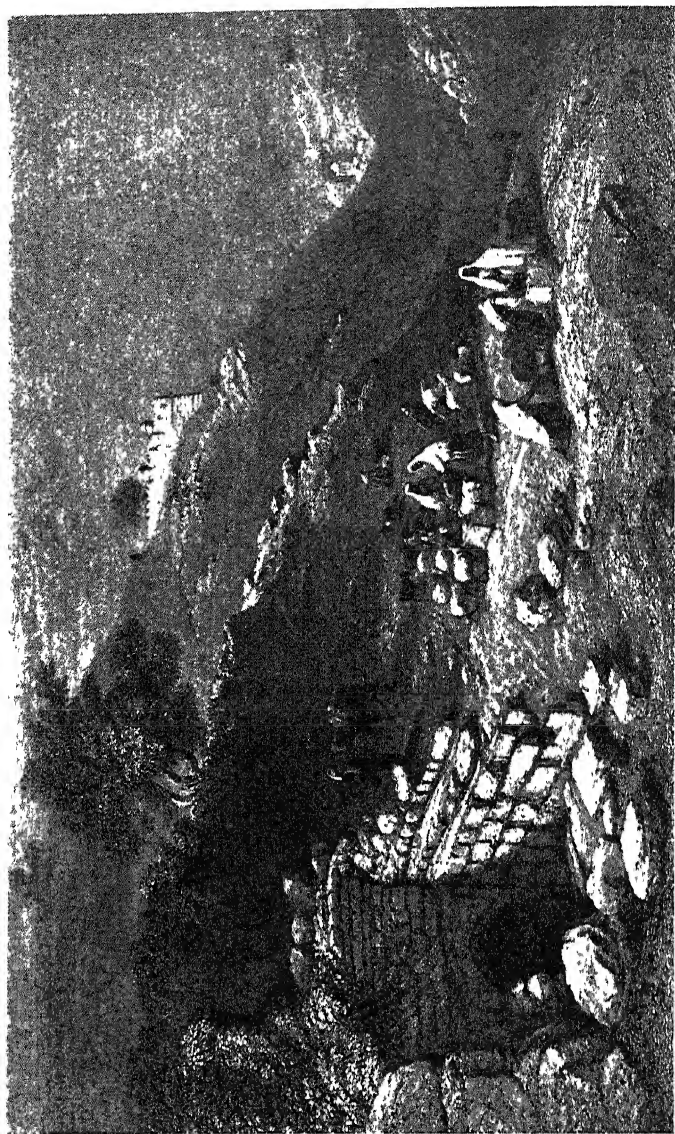


Fig. 18: The Fountain of Gihon

B. The Jews called the fountain of Gihon also the bath of Ishmael, the high priest. It is said that the high priests used to bathe there on the eve of the day of Atonement, before entering the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The ceremony was as follows:

A curtain of costly linen was spread out between the people and the spring, then the priest descended and dipped himself several times in the water, after which he put on garments of white linen. The priests did not don garments of gold because, it was said, they did not wish to waste the money of Israel.

### 53. THE POOL OF SILOAM

The Prophet Isaiah said: "This people have refused the waters of Siloam that go softly."

A. The waters of Gihon flow through a tunnel hewn in the mountain beneath the biblical Jerusalem, to the pool of Siloam which was in the olden days enclosed in the wall. The Hebrews call this pool *Berekat ha-Shiloah* (see Fig. 18a), which probably means the Pool of the conducted (water). King Hezekiah was afraid that the King of Assyria, in his siege of Jerusalem, would seize the fountains and Jerusalem would be in danger of thirst. Therefore he built this great tunnel, 1249 feet in length, from the fountain of Gihon to the pool of Siloam, and through it he brought the water into the town, and the fountain outside was sealed up. It is told of Hezekiah that "he also stopped the upper spring

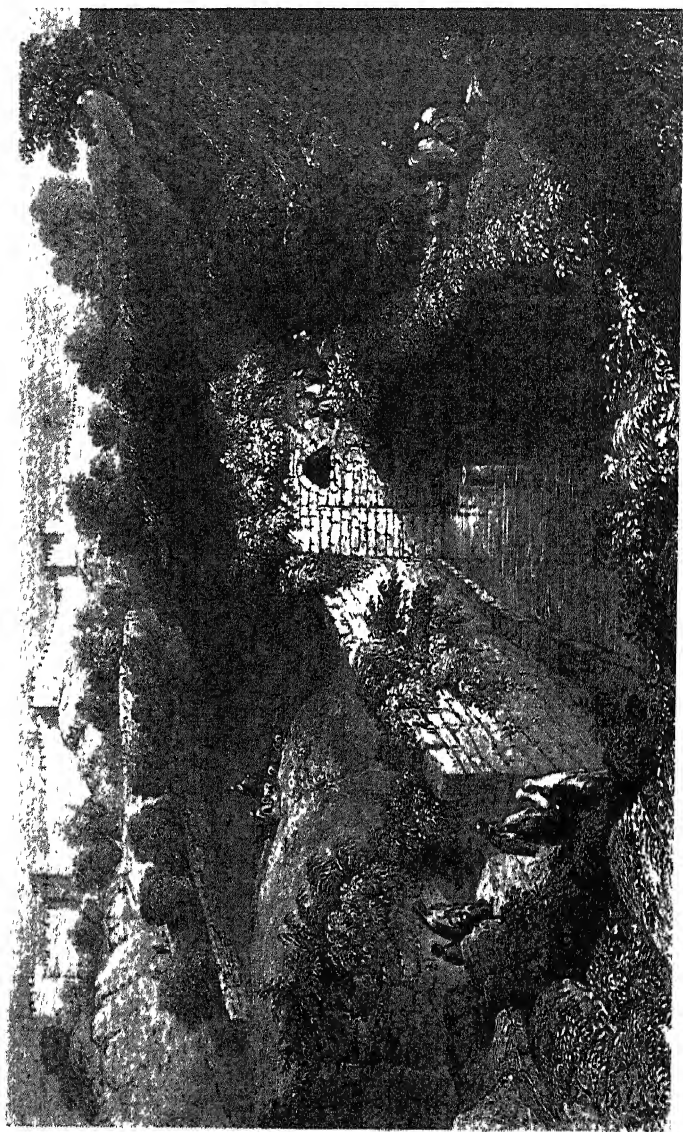


Fig. 18a: The Pool of Siloam

of the waters of Gihon, and brought them straight down on the west side of the city of David." And when the Assyrian approached Palestine, the children of Israel "stopped all the fountains, and the brook that flowed through the midst of the land, saying: Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?"

B. People believed that there was another underground tunnel between the Pool of Siloam and the well of Abraham in Ascalon which was dug by the Patriarch Abraham in the times of the Philistines.

Once some priests were bathing in the pool of Siloam, when a vessel fell from the hands of one of them and disappeared. After a time it was found in Abraham's Well, which is in Ascalon, situated on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

A Christian traveler who came in the year 333 to Jerusalem from the French city of Bordeaux, describes the pool of Siloam and says: "This spring runs for six days and nights, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, it does not run at all, either by day or night."

C. The Arabs call the fountain of Siloam by the name: '*Ain Silwan*, the Spring of Consolation. It is said that if any one oppressed and sorrowing drink the water of this spring, he will be relieved and consoled, because this spring derives its water from the Garden of Eden.

The Arab poet of the desert, Ruba, the son of Al-Ajaj, who lived in the eighth century, says in his despair:

"Were I made to drink the water of Silwan, even then I should not be comforted!"

The Moslem geographer, Shams ed-Din Makdissi (ca. 985 C.E.) writes: "It is said that on the night of *Arafat* (when the Moslem pilgrims stay on the Mount of Arafat near Mecca), the water of the holy well Zamzam (which was shown to Hagar and her son Ishmael and is now in the Mosque of Mecca) comes under ground to the water of the spring of Siloam. The people hold a festival here on that evening."

#### 54. WHO DISCOVERED THE GIHON?

King Hezekiah sealed up the spring of Gihon and directed the water through a tunnel into the pool of Siloam because he was sore afraid of Sennacherib, the King of Assyria, who came to besiege the city (see Legend 53).

In the days of Rabbi Hayyim Vital who lived in the sixteenth century there was in Jerusalem a tyrannous governor called Abu Seifen, the father of the two swords. He knew that the King of Israel had sealed up the fountain of Gihon, and he asked whether there was anyone who could open it. His friends said to him: "There is a wise Jew, a man of God, and his name is Rabbi Hayyim Vital. He will surely know how to open it."

The governor sent for him on the Friday and said to him: "I command you to open the fountain, which was sealed by your king, during the time that I shall

be at prayer in the Mosque. If you obey not, your blood be on your head."

A miracle happened to the wise Rabbi, and the holy ha-Ari (Leg. 182) appeared to him in a vision and said: "The soul of King Sennacherib, the enemy of King Hezekiah, has been transmitted into the body of this governor, and in your body there is a spark of the soul of King Hezekiah, peace be upon him! And now is the time to open the fountain of Gihon, for it was without the consent of the sages that Hezekiah sealed the waters of the fountain. As it is said: Six things did Hezekiah the King, but the sages praised him for three only . . . And for the other three the sages blamed him. One of them is the sealing of the waters of Gihon. This stratagem was not commanded because Hezekiah ought to have trusted in God, who had said: 'I will defend this city!' " "And now," continued the ha-Ari, "if you are able to open the sealed Gihon you will bring great blessing upon the people."

Rabbi Vital answered: "I shall open the fountain."

## 55. HOW EZRA FOUND THE TORAH

When the powerful and valorous Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came by divine command to Jerusalem to punish the Jews who had forsaken the laws given them by God, he despoiled the Temple of all its valuables . . . Only a small coffer of common stone, containing the Holy Law (*Torah*), was left, and it disappeared in the confusion that reigned during the sack of the city.



Forty years afterwards God determined to reëstablish the children of Israel in their old fatherland, and raised up the Prophet Ezra, who went among the children of Israel to show them how to rebuild the Temple and again worship the God of Israel according to the ancient rites. But the people declared that they would not submit to the laws unless the book in which Moses had written the Law, given to him by God on Mount Sinai, was produced.

Ezra began to pray and, yielding to a sudden inspiration, directed his steps to the fountain of Siloam, followed by all the people. When he arrived before it, he raised his hands to heaven, and offered up a prayer to the Almighty while the multitude knelt around. Suddenly a square stone rose above the surface of the water and glided along as if supported by an invisible hand. In that stone the priests discerned the long-missing sacred coffer. Ezra received it reverently, opened it with his own hands and the Torah of Moses sprang out as though endowed with life . . .

## 56. THE WELL OF JOB

To the southeast of Jerusalem, in the bed of the brook Kidron, there is a well, known in biblical history as En-rogel, the fuller's or washer's spring. (The washing or fulling of cloth in the olden days was performed with the feet, in Hebrew: *regel*.) Now this fountain is called *Bir Ayub*, the well of Job (see Fig. 19).

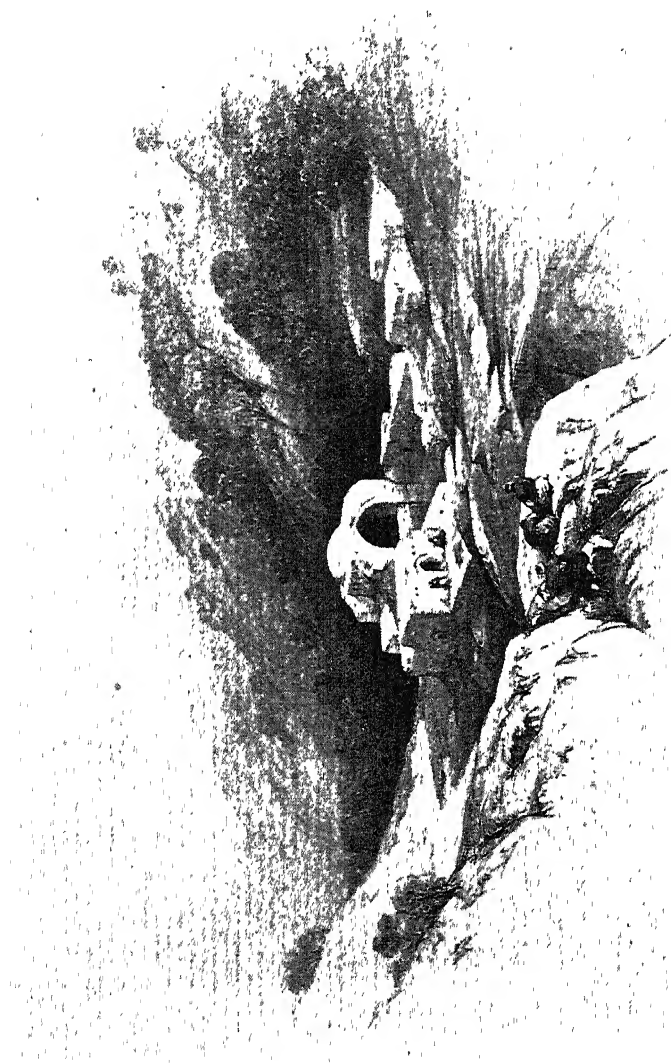


Fig. 19: The Well of Job (1839)

The Prophet Job was a perfect and upright man and one that feared God and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters, and he had sheep and cattle and camels in great abundance. This man was the greatest of all the men of the East. And God wanted to try Job and to see if he was faithful to Him. His sons and daughters died, and all his possessions were lost in a short time. In spite of this Job did not sin, nor did he murmur against the Lord. And God added to his troubles, and covered his body with boils from the sole of his foot unto the crown of his head. All the people deserted him, even his best friends. Only his wife remained with him.

And Job left his country and wandered with his wife over the world, and they were sustained with what was offered by the way. During his wanderings he came to Jerusalem, and all its inhabitants were pious and generous. They took pity on poor afflicted Job, and they fed him, trying to comfort him and put courage into his heart. Only at nightfall did Job and his wife leave the city, for it was the law of Jerusalem that no one who was afflicted in body should sleep within the walls of the city. So Job slept each night near the brook of Kidron.

God then decided to put Job to a final trial and to test his faith and trust in Him. So the Lord caused his wife to turn against him, and this woman who had been his comforter and faithful friend, wearied of her bitter misfortunes, said unto Job, "Dost thou still retain thine

integrity, curse God and die!" Job did not murmur against this new ordeal although his heart was torn with grief because of his wife's treachery. But he said to her: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

And God was greatly pleased now that He had proved Job and He said: It is time to heal him from his sickness and to reward him for his faith and trust. On the spot beyond the walls of the city, where Job was wont to sleep, God caused a spring of fresh water to flow and commanded Job to wash in the water so that he might be healed. Job did as the Lord commanded him and his flesh became as firm and as healthy as that of a child. On the same place God returned to Job all the treasures he had once possessed and greatly added to them.

And the waters from this well did not cease to flow from that day. For God saw that the people of Jerusalem were generous to Job and had always taken pity on him. So the fresh waters of this spring were given unto them as a reward. Thus was created the spring which is known as the Well of Job, to this day.

## 57. THE WELL OF NEHEMIAH

When the men of Judah were exiled from Jerusalem, Jeremiah the prophet commanded the exiled priests to take the everlasting fire of the altar and hide it, until

the days of the return of Israel. And they did so and no man knew where it was hidden, save the priests.

When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, he brought with him some of the young priests descended from those who had served the sanctuary. And they sought the fire. Descending the Well of Job (*En-rogel*), which is in the brook of Kidron (see Fig. 19), they found half frozen water in a little hollow in the wall. They took this water, brought it into the Temple and sprinkled it upon the altar. And the everlasting fire suddenly kindled itself anew, to the great joy of all Israel.

Ever since then, the Well of Job has also been known sometimes as the Well of Nehemiah.

## 58. THE FOUNTAIN OF ZEDEKIAH

When Zedekiah, the last of the kings of Judah, saw that Jerusalem was about to fall into the hands of the enemies, he was afraid that the holy treasures would also be lost. So he called together his best friends and they decided to conceal the holy treasures. In a certain fountain, which was later called '*En Zidkiyahu*, the fountain of Zedekiah, they concealed the harps which had been made by King David, and a great number of other musical instruments which were used in the Temple and which had been given to Moses on Mount Sinai. There also was a precious stone, which Moses had cut from under the Throne of the Almighty.

Warned by God, Jeremiah the prophet saved the

Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Altar of Incense, and hid them in a cave on Mount Nebo, the same mount which Moses ascended to view the Promised Land.

In another fountain called '*Ain Kahal*, the blue fountain, which is in the mountains of Galilee, south of Safed, were also hidden many vessels and utensils belonging to the Temple. One hundred and twenty thousand pieces of silver and one hundred and sixty thousand pieces of pure silver, two hundred thousand vessels of copper, one hundred and ten thousand vessels of iron, and also the golden Tables which stood under the tree of life and which grew in the holy garden, were hidden there. But no man knows exactly where these places are now.

When Napoleon Bonaparte came to Palestine, and knew, from historical documents, that in the Fountain of Kahal there were such valuable treasures, he and his men went to a place which they said was '*Ain Kahal* and excavated half of the hillside, but all in vain.

Only when the Messiah, the son of David (may he come soon and in our day!), comes, will these treasures be revealed unto the children of Israel.

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VII. ON THE MOUNTAINS OF JERUSALEM

“AS MOUNTAINS ARE ROUND ABOUT  
JERUSALEM SO THE LORD IS ROUND  
ABOUT HIS PEOPLE!”





## 59. THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

The Prophet Jeremiah said:

“At the time they shall call Jerusalem: the throne of the Lord,  
and all the nations shall be gathered unto it to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem!”

A. Zechariah prophesied:

“Behold the Day of the Lord cometh . . . For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle . . . Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle . . .

“And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the East; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them towards the eastern sea (Dead Sea) and half of them towards the western sea (Mediterranean Sea); in summer and in winter shall it be . . . And men shall dwell therein and there shall be no more extermination, but Jerusalem shall dwell safely.”

The part of the brook of Kidron which is at the foot of the Mount of Olives is called: *‘Emek Yehoshafat*, the valley of the Judgment of God (Fig. 20).

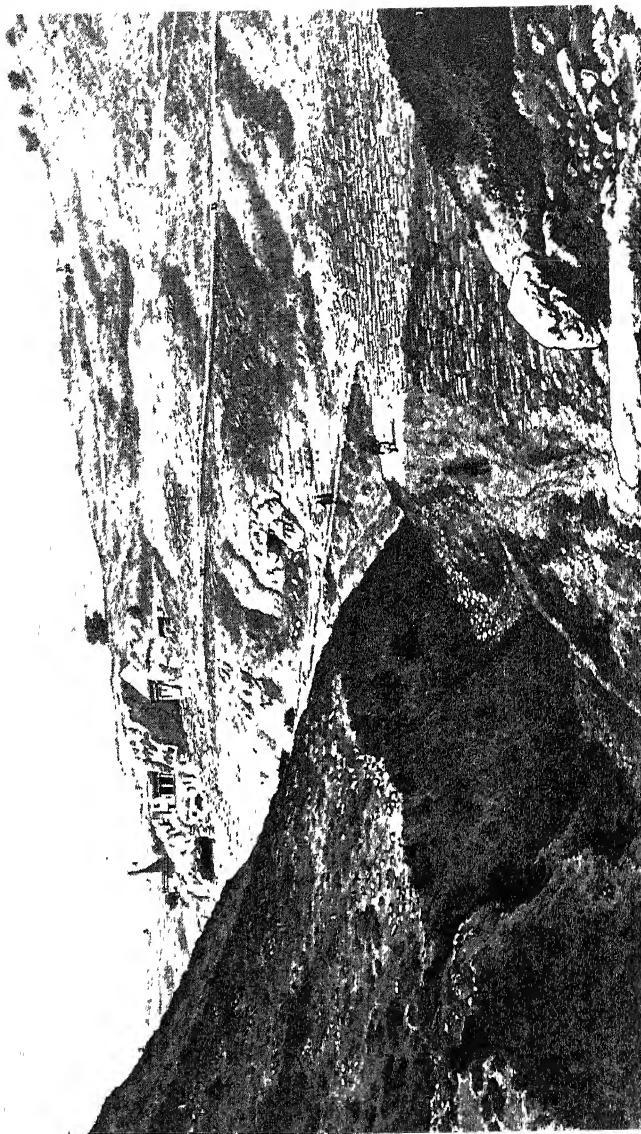


Fig. 20: The Mount of Olives

Joel prophesied:

"For, behold, in those days and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations, and will bring them into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and My heritage Israel whom they have scattered among the nations and parted My land . . . Haste ye, and come, all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together; thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord, let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about . . ."

B. The Sages of Israel said: "To be buried in Jerusalem is like being buried beneath the throne of the Lord. He who is buried in the soil of the Holy Land is assured of his portion in the eternal life."

The Psalmist sings, "I cried unto Thee, O Lord, I said Thou art my refuge and my portion in the *land* of the *living*." From here we learn that the Land of Israel is also known as "the Land of the Living." And why is it called so?—Because those who die in the Land of Israel, shall be the first to rise again in the days of the great Resurrection, when the Messiah comes.

What will the Almighty do with the righteous who die in the lands of exile? At the end of time the Almighty will create underground tunnels from one end of the earth to the other, leading to Zion. He will then command His ministering angels to bear the righteous

through these tunnels into the land of Israel, where they will rise and atonement will be granted to them, as it is written in the Song of Moses: "Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people, for He will be merciful unto His land, and to His people!"

At the end of time the waters shall rise from the bowels of the earth and spread over the face of the whole world. Only Palestine shall remain and rise above the waters, till it reaches the Garden of Eden, and they who will live on that day, will be the perfectly righteous and will enter the Kingdom of Eternal Life.

## 60. THE TWO BRIDGES

The Sages of Israel said: "In the Valley of Jehoshaphat the wicked shall be full of sorrow and the righteous full of joy!"

On the Day of Resurrection all human beings will be gathered together on the Mount of Olives (see Fig. 21), and the Judgment Seat will be on Mount Moriah which is opposite (see Fig. 20). Over the Valley of Jehoshaphat which is between these two mountains will appear two bridges for the passing of the resurrected ones to their judgment. One bridge will be made completely of iron, massive and strong, and the second bridge, parallel to the first, will be made of paper and will be light and frail. All the heathens will cross over the iron bridge, which will collapse under them; they will fall into the depths of the abyss beneath and none will remain.



Fig. 21: Jewish Cemetery on Mount of Olives

All the Jews will pass over the bridge of paper in peace and safety and will live eternal life.

## 61. THE MOUNT OF ANOINTMENT

A. The southern part of the Mount of Olives on whose slopes is the village Silwan (Shiloah) was called in Hebrew: *Har ha-Mishḥah*, the Mountain of Anointment. From the olives which grew there the oil was prepared for the anointing of the kings and priests. It is said that it was from this spot that the dove brought back an olive leaf to Noah in the Ark.

In the days of the Bible, altars for strange gods were sometimes erected on this mountain. And because of these offences the mountain was called instead of *Har ha-Mishḥah*, *Har ha-Mashḥit*, the Mount of Offence.

B. A Jewish scholar, Uri, the son of Simon, of Safed, writes: "Beyond the outskirts of Jerusalem there is a lofty mountain, on which stand two trees. It was from this point, we are told, that our father Abraham beheld Mount Moriah, as it is written in the Book of Genesis: 'Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men: Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship' . . ." Uri adds: "Men go thither to offer petitions and to pray."

C. In the south of Jerusalem there is a mountain called by the Arabs: *Jabal al-Makabbar*, which rises eastwards to the suburb of Talpiot. On its top stands

an old olive tree named by the Arabs: *Zaitunat al-Nabi*, the olive tree of the Prophet (Mohammed). It is related that when Mohammed came to besiege Jerusalem, which was occupied by the heathen, he stood under this olive tree and shot arrows at the Holy City. One of these arrows slew the king of the heathen and so Jerusalem was conquered.<sup>1</sup>

## 62. THE VALLEY OF HINNOM

To the south of Jerusalem a steep precipitous ravine stretches down to the valley of Kidron. It was called by the Hebrews *Ge ben-Hinnom*, the ravine of the son of Hinnom, probably after the name of a man Hinnom who once owned it. To this valley came the inhabitants of Jerusalem to worship idols and to offer their sons and their daughters. Even Manasseh King of Judah burned his children in the fire of Hinnom.

A. The prophet Jeremiah says about the inhabitants of Jerusalem: "And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither came it into My heart, therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Topheth nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter, for they

<sup>1</sup> It is well known that Mohammed never set foot in Palestine and did not conquer Jerusalem. The Holy City was only taken by the Moslems about four years after his death.



shall bury in Topheth till there be no place. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall frighten them away."

Why was this place called Topheth?—It is from the Hebrew word *tof* = drum. Because here the people used to beat drums to drown the cries of the burned children which would have roused the pity of their parents.

B. The Israelites who called this valley *Ge ben-Hinnom*, contracted this name into *Gehinnom*; and because it was a valley of depravity and abomination, the same name *Gehinnom* (Gehenna) was given to the place prepared for the wicked in the world to come, the opposite of the Garden of Eden, where the just and righteous will dwell in everlasting happiness.

The Sages of Israel said: There are three entrances to *Gehinnom* (Hell), one from the desert, one from the sea, and one from Jerusalem. Rabbi Johanan said, "There are two palm trees in the valley of Hinnom, and smoke rises from between them; here is the entrance to *Gehinnom*."

C. The idol Moloch (ruler) was the most important of the idols in the valley of Hinnom. He was represented by a figure surrounded by seven fences. His face was shaped like a calf, and his hands were stretched out ready to receive whatever was offered to him. His body was hollow, and a fire was kindled within it. When the people brought him offerings, they approached him according to the nature of their sacrifice.

Whoever brought a fowl was only allowed to pass through the first fence and sacrifice. The man who brought a goat entered through the second fence; and if it were a sheep, he entered the third. A calf allowed a man to enter through the fourth fence; a cow, through the fifth; and an ox, through the sixth; but whoever brought his son as an offering, entered through the seventh fence, close to Moloch. The man would kiss his son and then lay him in the arms of Moloch, which were red hot from the fire burning within him. The people used to bring drums and beat them vigorously so that the cries of the child should not be heard and grieve the father's heart.

The sages explain why this valley was called Hinnom. Because the child groaned (in Hebrew: *naham*) in its agony; but others say, because the spectators groaned and exclaimed to Moloch: "Let this offering be sweet, pleasant and fragrant to you!"

### 63. THE VALLEY OF SLAUGHTER

A long time ago, when Palestine was under the Egyptian Government, the caves in the valley of Hinnom were inhabited by a great number of monks and holy men who spent their time in fasting and prayer. Now it happened that the ruler in Egypt needed money, and therefore sent orders to the Governor of Jerusalem to make everybody pay a tax. The Governor wrote back to say that it was impossible to do so, seeing that

there were such large numbers of poor but holy men who, though Christians, lived like dervishes in the caves and who, as they earned nothing, could not pay the sum demanded of them.

On receiving this news the ruler of Egypt ordered his secretary to write back the following order: "Number the men" (in Arabic: *'Iḥṣu al-Rijāl!*), but whether through carelessness or wickedness (Allah knows), the secretary wrote *kh* instead of *ḥ* in the word *iḥṣu*—number, and so the order read: *ikhṣu al-Rijāl*,<sup>1</sup> = "mutilate the men." This cruelty was carried out literally. The sufferers all died in consequence, and were buried where they had lived, and the human bones now found in the caves of the valley of Hinnom, are supposed to have belonged to these monks and holy men.

#### 64. THE DESTRUCTION OF BETH-THER

"Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer . . . to the cities of Judah: Ye shall be built and I will raise up the decayed places thereof."

In the mountains of Judea near Jerusalem nestles the small hamlet Bettir. It is on the site of Beth-ther, which was famed during the revolt of Bar Kokeba—the great hero of Israel—against the Romans. On the hilltop by the village are scattered the ruins of a fortress, known to the Arabs as: *Khurbat al-Yahud*, the ruins of the Jews.

<sup>1</sup> The difference between *kh* and *ḥ* in Arabic writing is only that of a dot.

A. After the destruction of Jerusalem, Beth-ther was for a time a great Jewish town. And what was the cause of its downfall?—The Sages of Israel said: The cause of its downfall was the axle of a chariot. It was the custom at Beth-ther that when a boy was born, a cedar tree was planted; while an acacia tree (*Shittah*) was planted on the birth of a girl. When a youth wedded a maiden, their own trees would be cut down and used as supports for the wedding canopy. And should any tree be sickly or rot or perish, it was a very bad sign for the person in whose name the tree had been planted.

Once one of Caesar's daughters passed by Beth-ther, and the axle of her chariot wheel broke down. Her men went and cut down a cedar in the Beth-ther wood and prepared another shaft from it. The inhabitants of Beth-ther, hearing of this, were greatly enraged and attacked the princess and her retinue, who went to Caesar and told him: "The Jews have rebelled against thee, Caesar." Then the army of Caesar went up against Beth-ther, took it and destroyed it.

Why was it necessary to destroy Beth-ther? Because the men of the place kindled lamps of rejoicing after the destruction of the Temple and took no part in the anguish of Israel.

B. Bar Kokeba made a fortress of Beth-ther, where he had two hundred thousand men, each with a finger cut off. For when men came to join his forces each one had to cut off the little finger of his left hand to prove

his courage and stoutness of heart. But the sages sent a message to Bar Kokeba saying, "How long will you cripple Israel?" and he answered, "How else can I prove them worthy to join my army?"

Then they told him, "Whoever can uproot a cedar while galloping on horseback is capable of joining your army." And so Bar Kokeba had two hundred thousand men with fingers missing and two hundred thousand who could uproot cedars. When he went forth to battle he would pray, "Lord of the Universe, neither aid nor hinder me."

C. The Emperor Hadrian and his Roman hosts besieged Beth-ther for three and a half years. Of trumpeters alone he had eighty thousand pairs and each of them trumpeted for many cohorts, but he could not take the fortress until a certain Samaritan showed him a secret entrance to the town. The Romans entered and slew the inhabitants till their blood ran from the doorways and gutters and waterpipes, and horses swam in blood to their nostrils. And the blood flowed down to the valleys, carrying large boulders with it. It rushed through the water-courses for four miles out, and then out to sea.

There are two brooks in the valley of Yadayim, related the Sages of Israel, each going a different way. When they were filled with the blood of the slain after the war, the sages reckoned that they held two parts water to one of blood.

There were five hundred schools in Beth-ther, the

least of them containing five hundred children. These children used to say: "Should the foe come, we shall go out against them and put their eyes out with the styles wherewith we write." When the foe entered, they took the children, wrapped each one in his own book, and burned them all. The brains of three hundred children were beaten out on one stone.

The heathen made their vineyards fertile with Jewish blood for seven years, needing no manure. The wicked Hadrian had a vineyard eighteen miles square, the length of the side being as the distance from Tiberias to Sepphoris, and he fenced it with the corpses of Beth-ther. And no orders were given to bury them until a new king came to the throne.

D. Among the slain in Beth-ther, the Romans found the headless corpse of Bar Kokeba, which was entwined by a great snake. The corpse disappeared and no one knows where Bar Kokeba is buried.

The Jewish traveler Rabbi Isaac Heilo, who visited Palestine in 1333, tells the following about a certain place called Maon, which is in the south of Hebron: "One day, during prayer, a wall of the synagogue collapsed and there issued from the spot great flames of fire which illumined the whole district. Then stars exceedingly beautiful in appearance and shining brightly arranged themselves in letters, till the following words appeared—'Here lies hidden Bar Kokeba, the King, the Messiah!'"

## 65. THE VISION OF BETH-EL

A. "Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, because the sun was set, and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep . . . And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not.' And he was afraid and said, 'How dreadful is this place! This is the gate of heaven!' And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el, the house of God."

It says, "And he (Jacob) took of the *stones* of that place, and put them for his pillows," and afterwards it says: "And Jacob . . . took the *stone* that he had put for his pillows." Why does it say in the beginning "*stones*" and at the end "*stone*"? The Sages of Israel explained: When Jacob put his head on the stones at the beginning of the night, every stone said: "Will the righteous lay his head on me?" And so all the stones united together, and when Jacob rose in the morning he found only one stone under him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is said that the stone which is under the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, London, known as Jacob's Pillow or the Stone of Scone, was brought from Beth-el. This stone was for many centuries in the possession of Scotland, and it was held in reverence by the Scots from the earliest time. The Scottish kings were crowned while seated on it at the town of Scone, which is now near Perth, Scotland. King Edward I of England removed the stone from Scotland about 1296, and carried it with him to London. In the year 1300 was made the coronation chair which encloses this stone, and since that time it has been the coronation chair of the Kings of Great Britain.

B. Rabbi Isaac Heilo, the Jewish traveler who visited Palestine in 1333, tells the following about Beth-el, now a little village called Bittin, north of Jerusalem: "There is an old monument on the grave of the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite, who prophesied to Jeroboam that he would be king of Israel after the death of King Solomon . . . Beside this monument occurred a great miracle in the days of the Roman King Hadrian, the great enemy and persecutor of Israel. After he passed at the head of his troops through Palestine, and slaughtered many Jews, he arrived at this tomb. There he heard a voice issuing from the grave, which called to him: 'O wretched man, what do you want, and whither are you going? Do you not know that the victims that you seek are the children of Abraham, the beloved of God?' This voice had such an effect on his mind that Hadrian resolved to embrace the faith of Israel."

.





## VIII. BETHLEHEM AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

THE PROPHET MICAH SAID:  
THOU, BETHLEHEM EPHRATHAH,  
WHICH ART LITTLE TO BE AMONG THE  
THOUSANDS OF JUDAH, OUT OF THEE  
SHALL ONE COME FORTH UNTO ME  
THAT IS TO BE RULER IN ISRAEL!



## 66. THE FIELD OF HABAKKUK

Round Bethlehem stretch out on the slopes of the mountains vineyards and cornfields. Here is shown the field where Ruth came from the mountain of Moab to glean the sheaves.

It is said that the prophet Habakkuk also had a field here (*campus Habacuc*). One day, when he went to his field to bring food to his day laborer during the days of the harvest, the words of God came to him, saying: "Go and bring this meal to Daniel My servant, who is in the land of the Chaldees in the den of the lions!" And Habakkuk said: "O my Lord, who will lead me there in this time, for the way is very far!"

Suddenly an angel came and seized him by the tuft of hair on his head and carried him with the food in his hand, and brought him to Daniel in the den.

Daniel ate and drank together with Habakkuk. And after that the angel took Habakkuk and brought him back to his place before the harvesters finished their meal.

## 67. THE TOMB OF RACHEL

"The Holy One, blessed be He, said:  
For thy sake, O Rachel,  
I bring Israel back to his place."

A. "And Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrath which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave unto this day" (Fig. 22, 23).



one piece of marble, stands above them all. It is very large, and it would take many men to lift it. A certain Christian priest once took away the large stone from the grave and placed it in a building for a strange

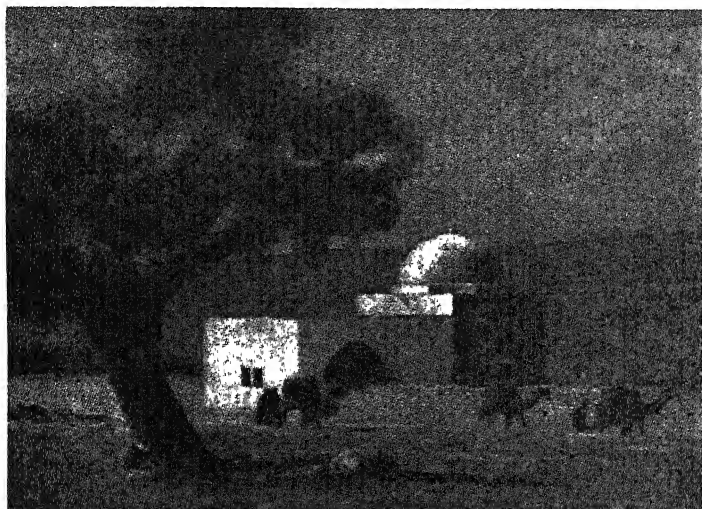


Fig. 23: The Tomb of Rachel in Our Days

service. In the morning, however, it was seen on the grave as before. This was repeated several times, until at last they abstained from carrying it away. On the stone is engraved the name of Jacob.”

## 68. THE POOLS OF SOLOMON

A. On the road from Jerusalem to Hebron there are three pools, known as Solomon's Pools (*Piscina Salomonis*) (see Fig. 24). It is said that King Solomon built these Pools. In his book of Ecclesiastes he refers to this work by the words: "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits. I made me *pools of water*, to water the wood that bringeth forth trees." These gardens and orchards were round the village Artas, which was called by the Crusaders *Villa Salomon* or *Hortus Salomonis*, the garden of Solomon. The Latin word *hortus*, garden, was corrupted into the name Artas, which is now a small village hidden in the mountains of Bethlehem near Solomon's Pools. Close to Solomon's Pools there is a fountain called '*Ain Saleh*. Possibly this is the spring which is referred to in the words of the Song of Songs: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." (In Hebrew: *Ma'ayan he-Ḥatum* and in Latin: *Fons Signatus*.)

B. On the southern side of Solomon's Pools there is another fountain called 'En Etam. It is related by the Sages of Israel: When the children of Israel were driven into exile, there went with them to Babylon eight hundred different kinds of locusts, innumerable birds as well as seven hundred different kinds of pure fish. The fish live in the waters of the river Euphrates, and

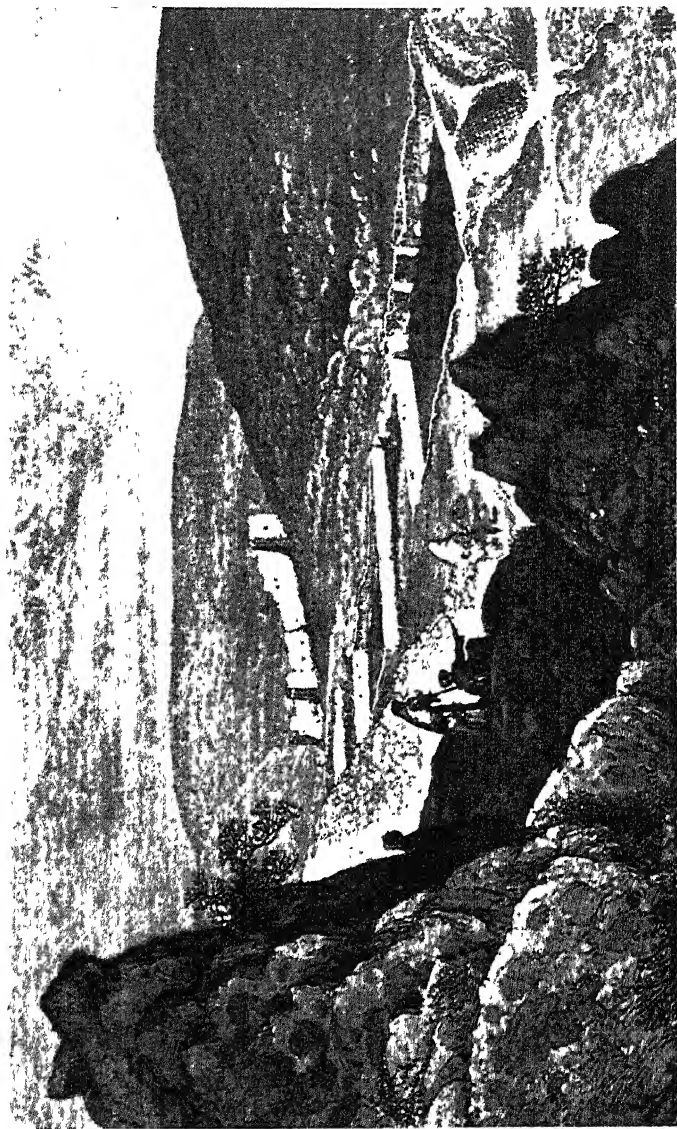


Fig. 24. The Pools of Solomon



when the children of Israel returned to their land, the locusts, the birds and the fish returned with them.

And how did the fish return?—Through the channels running underground between Palestine and Mesopotamia, in which the waters of the Euphrates flow right unto the fountain of Etam.

C. Near this fountain was the city of Etam which was fortified by Rehoboam, the King of Judah.

Rabbi Isaac Heilo, who was in Palestine in 1333, relates of Etam:—"To-day it is deserted, and there are no inhabitants other than a few poor Jews who watch over the old synagogue of Etam. It is said that this is one of the seven synagogues which existed in the days of Rabbi Simeon, the son of Yohai. One of the guardians of the synagogue said to me: 'During every feast of Pentecost, the time of the giving of the Law, one can hear a voice proceeding from the Ark of the Law, saying: Ye children of Israel, study the Law, as a reward for which the Lord will console you and bring about your deliverance. All your troubles have come unto you because your forefathers abandoned the study of the Law.' This is the voice of Simeon the son of Yohai, who returns each year to this synagogue."

## IX. HEBRON AND MACHPELAH

“FROM THE EARTH OF HEBRON WAS  
ADAM CREATED  
THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH IS THE  
BRIDGEHEAD TO EDEN.”



## 69. THE PRAISE OF HEBRON

A. Hebron is one of the oldest cities of the world. Here lived the first patriarchs of Israel. And God said to Abraham: "Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee. . . Then Abram removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord . . . And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre . . ."

Why was the city called Hebron?—The Sages of Israel said: "The name is made up of two Hebrew words: *Haber Naeh*—agreeable friend, that is Abraham, who was the first agreeable friend of God."

The Arabs call this city: *Al-Khalil al-Rahman*, the friend of the Merciful, that is God,—in memory of Abraham, who lived and is buried there, and who was the first friend of God.

B. It is written in the Bible: "And the name of Hebron before was Kiriath-arba (city of Arba), which Arba was a great man among the Anakim (Giants)." Rabbi Heilo, in 1333, relates that there was found in Hebron a tremendous skeleton, which is said to be that of one of the giants of Hebron.

The Sages of Israel said: "Why was Hebron called by the name Kiriath-arba, which means the fourfold city? By reason of the four couples who lie buried

there. They are Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah."

Another said: "Why is it called Hebron and Kiriath-arba?—Because the soul of everyone who is buried here ascends to heaven and unites (in Hebrew, *mit-habber*) with the four (in Hebrew, *arba*) groups of angels of the Divine Presence."

C. The Sages of Israel said: There is no rocky soil in the Land of Israel save at Hebron. And what was Hebron . . . the refuse of the Land of Israel . . . Now if Hebron is the refuse of the land of Israel and is yet more fertile than the best land in Egypt, which has a more fertile soil than any other land, one may easily infer concerning the richness of soil in the rest of the land of Israel.

## 70. THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH

A. The Sages of Israel said: "There are three places regarding which the nations cannot say to Israel: 'Ye have stolen them.' These are the cave of Machpelah, the grave of Joseph and the Temple of Jerusalem." And why the Cave of Machpelah?—Because it is written: "And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver . . . and the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in that field, that were in all the

borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession . . .”

Why was this cave called in Hebrew: *Me'arat ha-Makpelah*, the double cave? Some say that there are two caves therein, one beyond the other; or a cave with an attic above it. Others say it was called the double cave because of the four couples of patriarchs and matriarchs who lie buried there: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah.

B. When Adam passed the Cave of Machpelah, he saw a faint light streaming from it and understood that this light came from Eden. For that reason he chose to be buried there (see Fig. 24a).

Rabbi Abbahu of Caesarea (third century) says: It was called *Me'arat ha-Makpelah*, the cave of the folded one, because when Adam died God folded his giant body and buried him in the cave.

And how did Abraham find this cave? Once when he dwelt in the plains of Mamre, one of his favorite calves fled from him. He pursued it and it ran into a certain cave. When Abraham followed, the portals of Eden were thrown open to him and he saw the image of Adam; and therefore Abraham desired this cave, which is that of Machpelah.

When a man's soul leaves his body, it goes to the cave of Machpelah; here it is given an account book of the man's life, whereby it enters the garden of Eden.

The cave of Machpelah is famed as the bridgehead

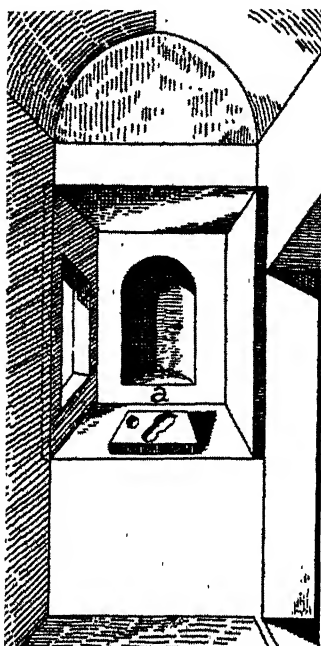


Fig. 24a: The Sanctuary of Adam  
in the Machpelah  
(a: the Footprint of Adam)

to Eden. Everyone that lives in Hebron knows for certain that when he dies and is buried there, his soul merits an immediate ascent to Eden, without any distress or pangs of passage whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the mosque which is built on the cave of Machpelah are shown the monuments of the patriarchs and their wives, save Adam and Eve. In a corner of the women's gallery, which is in this mosque, there is a little recess in the wall. On its shelf about three feet from the floor, there is a stone slab with the impression of a human foot (see Fig. 24a). It is said that this is the footprint of Adam and therefore this corner is called: *Makam Adam*, the sanctuary of Adam.

## 71. ESAU IN THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH

The Sages of Israel said: "As long as Esau lived in the land of Israel, Jacob could not be seen there."

When Jacob died, his children brought him to the Cave of Machpelah. On arriving at the cave, Esau his brother once more protested and said: "Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah are all buried here. Jacob disposed of his share when he buried Leah in it, and now the remaining one belongs to me." "But thou didst sell thy share with thy birthright," remonstrated the sons of Jacob. "Nay," rejoined Esau, "that did not include my share in the burial place." "Indeed it did," they argued, "for our father just before he died, said: 'In my grave which I have bought for myself'."

Hushim, the son of Dan, and grandson of Jacob, being deaf, asked what was the cause of the commotion. On being told what it was, he snatched up a club and smote Esau so hard that his eyes dropped out and fell upon the feet of Jacob; at which Jacob opened his eyes and smiled grimly . . .

## 72. RABBI BANNA'A IN THE MACHPELAH

A. Rabbi Banna'a, in order to determine the impure places of Palestine, carefully investigated and measured the caves of the country. When he reached the Cave of Machpelah, he found Eliezer the servant of Abraham



standing at the entrance to the cave. Rabbi Banna'a asked him, "What is Abraham doing?" And he answered: "He is sleeping within, his head rests in Sarah's lap, and she is watching his face." And he said to him: "Go and tell Abraham that Rabbi Banna'a is waiting at the entrance." Eliezer said this unto Abraham and the latter answered: "Tell him to enter."

Rabbi Banna'a entered and examined the place; and when he approached the cave of Adam, a voice from heaven cried: "Turn thine eyes away. For though it is permitted thee to gaze upon the image of man as it is reflected in Abraham, it is not permitted to gaze upon Adam, who is created in the image of God." "But I want to measure the cave," remonstrated Rabbi Banna'a. "As it measures externally, so you may take its internal measurement," answered the voice from heaven.

Rabbi Banna'a concludes by saying that of Adam he only saw the heels of his feet, and they were like unto the disc of the sun shining in the heavens.

### 73. THE VOICES OF MACHPELAH

One morning the Arabs came to the Jews and said: "All of a sudden, we heard a great noise like the roaring of lions issuing forth from the depths of the Cave of Machpelah. A great fear and trembling seized hold of us and we fell fainting to the ground, and an hour later we rose deeply disturbed in our minds."

Some Jews who heard this, believed that it was a

sign that the redeemer was coming unto Zion. Many, however, had no faith in the story, saying: "The Arabs speak not the truth and are merely mocking at us. The Holy One, blessed be His Name, will send us the true sign of redemption."

A few days after the massacres that took place in Hebron in the month of August 1929, when Arab mobs attacked and slaughtered many defenceless Jews, the following story was related:—"In the middle of the night a voice issued from the cave and said: 'Why did you slaughter My children, O you children of Ishmael? Why have you dishonored the name of Abraham your ancestor?' Women heard a voice like unto the voice of a woman, crying: 'Why have you spilt innocent blood, why had you no mercy?'"

It is said that these voices were heard for many nights, accompanied by much moaning and weeping.

#### 74. WHEN THE JEWS ENTERED MACHPELAH

Once in the olden days, God held back the rain from the earth and not a single drop fell from one end of the land to the other. The Jews fasted and prayed, supplicated and prostrated themselves before the graves of the holy men, but no answer came from the heavens. When the Governor insisted upon still further prayer, they answered him, "If you will permit us to enter the Cave of Machpelah and pray to our forefathers there, the rain will come."

Immediately the Governor sent to the great judge of Damascus, who held the key of the Cave of Machpelah, saying to him: "Write to the Sultan of Constantinople to give the Jews permission to enter the Cave of Machpelah and to pray to their forefathers for rain, lest we all die of starvation."

The great judge in Damascus thought to himself, "If I wait until I receive permission from the Sultan, the autumn will pass, and what will be the use of praying for rain when the season is over?" Straight away he sent the key to the Governor, in order that the Jews might enter the cave.

Then the Jews chose from amongst them ten God-fearing men, learned in the ways of the Law and its mysteries, and they came to Hebron and entered the cave. When they had descended five steps, they stood and recited the first book of Psalms with great fervor and in bitter tones, after which they sent the beadle to see whether clouds had begun to gather in the sky, and the beadle returned and said, "The sun still shines in the sky as in the days of summer." So they descended the next five steps and recited the second book of the Psalms. They sent the beadle once more, but he returned and said: "The sun is still shining upon the earth." They therefore descended another five steps and recited the third book of Psalms, after which they told the beadle to go forth and look at the sky. This time he returned and said, "The sky is now over-cast with clouds, and the rain has begun to fall." When they

heard this, the ten men immediately ceased to pray for rain and began to pray for the redemption of Israel.

Scarcely, however, had they begun when suddenly a great wind storm arose from the depths of the cave, and drove them forth with great force and violence. Then they understood that the hour of redemption had not yet struck. But they returned in peace to Jerusalem, and the Lord's blessing went with them in all that they did that year.

## 75. THE SYNAGOGUE OF ABRAHAM

"Let us be grateful to our forefathers for revealing to us the place of prayer."

Many years ago, the Jewish inhabitants of Hebron were very few in number; there being only nine men. On Sabbaths and festivals the Jews from the neighboring villages would come to Hebron to pray. Once on the eve of the Day of Atonement, the nine men came to the synagogue to pray, and there they awaited the villagers. But they did not come, as they had all gone to Jerusalem. The men were in great trouble, for they were not able to pray, being only nine, while the requisite number for formal prayer is not less than ten (*minyan*). When darkness approached, they grieved deeply, but lo, as they lifted up their eyes they saw an old man approaching and they rejoiced greatly. When he came to them, they offered him food before the fast, and he answered that he had already eaten on the way.

So they began to pray and thus passed the Day of Atonement.

At the end of the fast they quarreled with one another, for each wanted to take the stranger to his house. At last they cast lots, and the lot fell to the

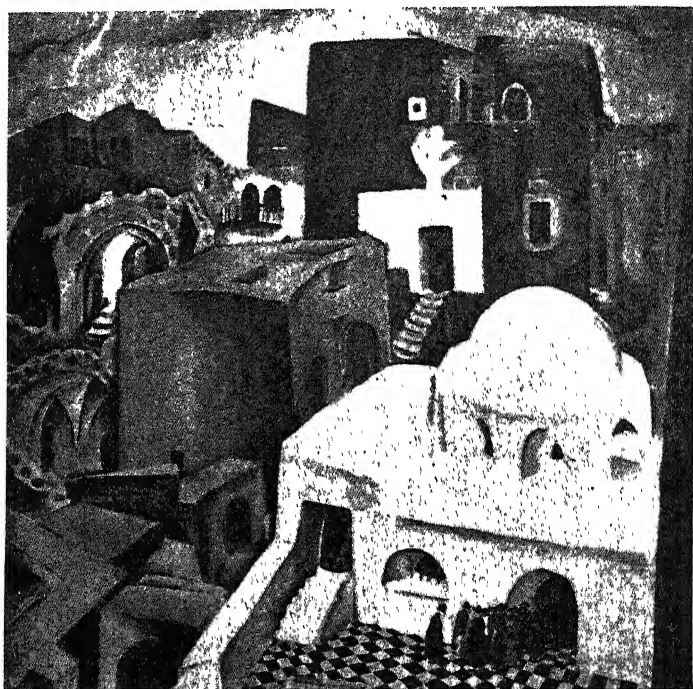


Fig. 25: The Synagogue of Abraham

cantor of the community, who was a pious and upright man and an interpreter of dreams and visions. So the cantor took the stranger to his house in great joy. When he reached his home and was about to ask his

guest to enter first, he turned and found that he had vanished. In great trouble he searched for him everywhere, but could not find him.

On the same night, the stranger visited him in a dream and said: "I was your guest yesterday and I am Abraham your father. I saw your great trouble and came to complete your number, so that you might pray together according to the commands of the Lord." The cantor related this to the men of his community, who rejoiced greatly; and from that time they called the synagogue, "The House of Abraham, our Patriarch," and it exists in Hebron to this day. (See Fig. 25).

## 76. THE MIRACLE AT HEBRON

He who sees a place where miracles were wrought  
for Israel should say,  
"Blessed is He who wrought miracles for our  
fathers."

Many years ago, a cruel Sheikh reigned over Hebron. One day he summoned the chiefs of the Jewish community and said to them, "Know that ye must bring me 50,000 piasters within three days. And should ye fail, your end will be a bitter one. I shall enslave half of you and burn the rest."

The Hebron Jews were poverty-stricken and their souls shrank within them in fear when they heard this terrible decree. The rabbis ordained fasts and supplications, and all the congregation, men, women and children, went to the synagogue and prayed and wept with all their hearts and souls.

At midnight the ruler dreamed a dream. Three old men stood over him and demanded 50,000 piasters; should he not produce them they would at once slay him. Terror-stricken, the ruler quickly left his bed and with trembling hands took from his treasure chest a purse filled with gold and silver coins which he gave them. . .

The Jews were praying and prostrating themselves before the Holy Ark in the synagogue of Abraham and the beadle sat at the narrow lowly ghetto gate, mournfully thinking of the plight of his brethren. Suddenly he heard a noise before the gate; and fear seized hold of him, for he thought the messengers of the ruler were here already. But to his astonishment he saw the hand of a man tearing a hole through the gate; and as he gazed upon it in awe and wonderment, it threw him a purse.

The beadle opened the purse and beheld gold and silver coins; and he bore it with great joy to the elders of the congregation at the synagogue. They opened it and found 50,000 piasters, the sum their ruler demanded from them. Then they understood that the hand of God had wrought this miracle, and they rejoiced greatly.

Three days passed; then the soldiers burst into the ghetto and demanded the money. The rabbi handed the purse to them. They brought it to their lord, who recognized the purse he had taken out from his treasury to give the three elders of his dream; and he understood that God had aided the Jews, and cried: "Behold, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." And he did not persecute the Jews again.

The Jews of Hebron appointed the fourteenth day of the month Tebet, as a day of joy and gladness to commemorate the miracle. This festival of theirs they call the *Takka Purim*. *Takka* is the Arabic name for a small lattice; and the reference is to the lattice torn in the ghetto gate, whereby the hidden hand forced its way and threw the purse.

When you visit Hebron go to the ghetto, where you can still see the gate with the small lattice and the opening torn through it.

## 77. PURIM OF HEBRON

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ibrahim Pasha, son of the ruler of Egypt, who had rebelled against the Turks, went up to reign over Palestine. He ruled with a heavy hand and imposed exorbitant taxes upon the inhabitants so that the natives rebelled, and among them the Arabs of Hebron.

Ibrahim Pasha gathered 20,000 men and went up to attack Hebron in the year 1834. He captured it and allowed his men three days in which to loot and plunder at will, and many of the Arabs fled to the Jewish quarter and took refuge in Jewish houses.

Then the Jews were denounced for harboring the rebels, and the Pasha's angry soldiers came and wished to storm the Jewish quarter as well. But as they neared the Jewish quarter and prepared to burst into the narrow courtyards and twisting alleys, a miracle occurred. A sudden order came from the Pasha that



the Jewish quarter should be left undisturbed. Joy came once again to the Jews and they made the day of this miracle, the first day of the month of Ab, an annual festival. They called it: "Purim of Ibrahim Pasha" or "Purim of Hebron," and celebrated it for several generations.

### 78. THE OAK OF ABRAHAM

A. Near Hebron there stands a very old oak tree of the kind well known in the wild forests of the land (*Quercus pseudococcifera*). (See Fig. 26). According to the tradition, this is one of the oaks of Mamre, where Abraham pitched his tent.<sup>1</sup> "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him . . . and he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them: and he stood by them under the tree . . ."

Flavius Josephus writes:—"There is also there (in Hebron), shown at the distance of six furlongs from the city, a very large turpentine tree, and report goes that this tree has continued ever since the creation of the world."

B. Arculfus, who visited the Holy Land in the year 670, relates about the oak which existed from the beginning of the world . . . "A spurious trunk still remained rooted in the ground which has been cut on

<sup>1</sup> The Jews call Abraham's Oak: *Eshel Abraham*, the tamarisk tree of Abraham. This name is derived from the words of Genesis: "And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree (grove) in Beer-Sheba and called thereon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God."

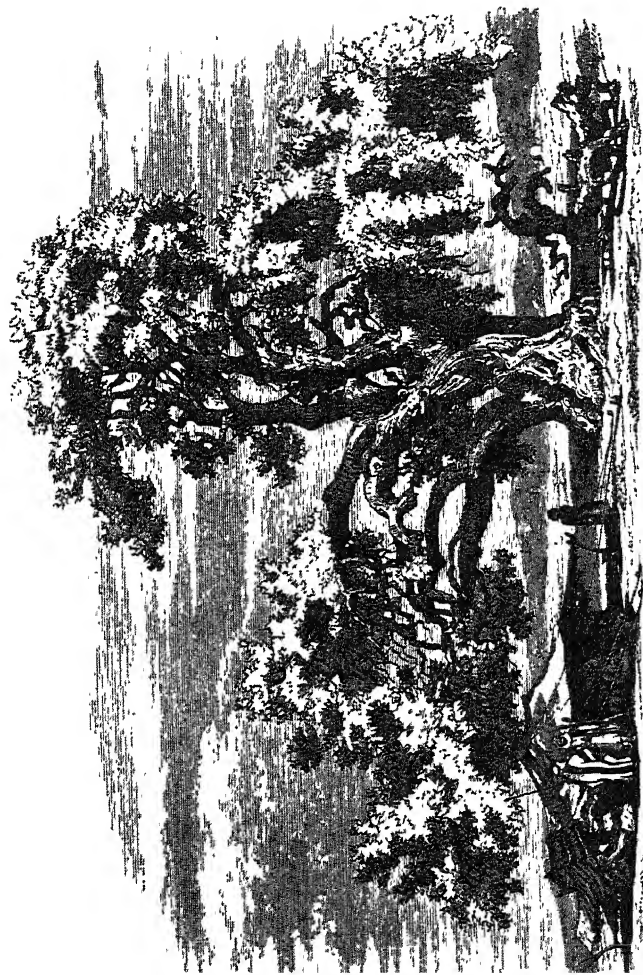


Fig. 26: The Oak of Abraham (1860)

all sides by axes. Small chips are carried to different parts of the world on account of the veneration in which it is held, since according to tradition it was underneath this tree that Abraham received the three angels whom the Lord sent to visit him.

"It is said that the oak of Abraham grew up from the staff which one of these angels put into the earth."

C. The English traveler, Sir John Mandeville, writes in the year 1336 C.E.: "A little way from Hebron . . . there is a tree of oak that the Saracens call Dirpe, that is of Abraham's time . . . And they say that it hath been there since the beginning of the world, and was once green and bare leaves, until the time that Jesus died on the cross, and then it dried; and so did all the trees that were then in the world. And some say, by their prophecies, that a lord, a prince of the west side of the world, shall win the Promised Land, that is, the Holy Land, with the help of the Christian men, and he shall sing a mass under that dry tree; and then the tree shall wax green and bear both fruit and leaves, and through that miracle many Saracens and Jews shall be turned to the Christian faith; and therefore, they do great worship thereto, and keep it full busily . . ."

## 79. THE FIELD OF ADAM

The dust out of which God created Adam was taken from one of the fields of Hebron. In the middle ages this field was called in Latin: *Ager Damascenus*, the

field of Damascus, after the steward of Abraham's house, Eliezer of Damascus. After the exile of Adam from Eden, he lived in a cave in Hebron and here also Abel killed Cain, his brother. Adam and Eve were buried in Hebron in the cave of Machpelah.

A. Fettelus, the Archdeacon of Antioch (Syria), writes in the year 1130 C.E. about Hebron being near "the Valley of Tears (*Vallis lacrymarum*). It is so called because in it Adam mourned for his son Abel for a hundred years . . . In Hebron is shown the field from the soil of which they say Adam was formed . . . Those dwelling near that region dig in the above named field and take its soil for sale in some parts of Egypt and Arabia where it is needed, as it is used in different places as spices (for medicine). The field we have mentioned, however deeply and widely it is dug, yet at the close of the year, by divine dispensation, it is found to be completely renewed: the soil of this field is of a red color, wherefore the Hebrews have a tradition that Adam was of a reddish color."

B. The German pilgrim, Burchard of Mount Zion, who came to the Holy Land in the year 1280, writes:

"West of the Cave of Machpelah is the field of Damascus, where Adam was formed from clay. As a matter of fact, this field has exceeding red earth, which can be moulded like wax. I took a good quantity thereof away with me. So do the other pilgrims and Christians who visit these places; moreover, the Saracens carry this earth on the backs of camels to

Egypt, Ethiopia, India and other places, and sell it for a very precious spice. Yet there seems to be only a small hole dug in the place. It is said that at the end of the year, however big a hole may have been dug, it is miraculously filled up again. I forgot to inquire about the truth of this, but I can say this much, that when I was there the hole was a small one so that four men could scarce have sat therein and was not deeper than up to my shoulders. It is said that no beast attacks him who carries any of that earth and that it saves a man from falling . . .

“A bowshot south of the place where the earth is dug is the place where Cain slew his brother Abel. Also two bowshots west of where the earth is dug, on a hill by the side of Hebron, is a cave in the rock where Adam and Eve mourned for their son Abel for a hundred years. In the cave there are their beds to this day, and the fountain from which they drank springs up inside the cave.”

<sup>1</sup> One hill of Jerusalem was called Golgatha (Calvary) from the Hebrew word *Gulgolet*, skull. Origen, who lived in Palestine in the beginning of the third century, says that according to a Hebrew tradition, this was the place where the skull of Adam was found and that it was known to Solomon through his great wisdom. The Bishop Moses Bar Cepha, in the tenth century, wrote: “Adam, after the loss of paradise, first lived in Judea and, after traveling in many countries and dwelling in many places, came towards the end of his days to Mount Jebus, and was buried there.” When Noah, at the approach of the deluge, entered the ark with his sons, he took the bones of Adam with him, and when he left the ark after the flood he distributed the bones among his sons . . . Thus he gave Adam’s skull to his eldest son, Shem, and allotted to him the land of Judea. And so it happened that Shem, when he came to Judea, reburied the skull of Adam at Jebus (Jerusalem).

## X. THE VALLEY OF JERICHO

JOSHUA THE SON OF NUN SAID:

"CURSED BE THE MAN BEFORE THE  
LORD THAT RISETH UP AND BUILDETH  
THIS CITY JERICHO."



## 80. THE PRAISE OF JERICHO

A. In olden days many gardens of balsam plants grew in the plains of Jericho and the air around was heavy with its perfumes, just as to-day the air of Jaffa is filled with the sweet scent of the orange blossom. Because of these sweet smelling plants it is said that the city received the name of Jericho, which is from the Hebrew word *reah*, meaning scent, perfume. The Sages of Israel said: Jericho was pervaded not only by the perfume of its own gardens, but by that of the incense from the Temple at Jerusalem, and it is said that the goats of Jericho used to sneeze from the smell of this incense!

There was no need for the women of Jericho to use perfume because of the incense burnt at the Temple, neither was it necessary for a bride to use scent, for the same reason.

To Jericho came not only the scent of incense, but also the sound of the flutes, and the horn, and the songs of the priests as they sang in the Temple. Even the voice of the high priest was heard when he uttered the words *Adonai, Adonai*, O God, O God!

B. The valley of Jericho is the lowest spot of Palestine (see Fig. 27), and for that reason owing to the heat which prevails there, even in winter, its fruits are the first to ripen in the whole country.





Fig. 27: The Valley of Jericho (1819)

Jericho and its surroundings were in the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin. When Jacob blessed his children, he said: "Benjamin is a wolf that raveneth." Why should Jacob have compared Benjamin to a wolf and not one of his other sons? asked the Sages of Israel. It is because the valley of Jericho was to be in his territory. As the wolf snatches his prey more swiftly than any other animal, so the valley of Jericho hastens to ripen its fruit before any other part of the country.

C. The scenery round the valley of Jericho is of exceeding beauty. The Jordan wanders peacefully through the plain into the Dead Sea, which stretches out like a shimmering mirror. To the east side are the blue-tinted mountains of Moab capped by Pisgah, on which stood Moses the son of Amram and looked into the land promised to Israel.

After the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Judah, the Lord, blessed be His name, said to Jeremiah the prophet: "Go then to the bank of the river Jordan, and lift up thy voice and call: Son of Amram, stand up and behold how thy flock, Israel, is being torn to pieces by the enemy!"

## 81. THE JORDAN OF JERICHO

A. "And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, the priests that bore the ark of the covenant being before the people;

and when they that bore the ark were come unto the Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bore the ark were dipped in the brink of the water—for Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest—that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up in one heap . . . and those that went down toward the sea of the Arabah, even the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off; and the people passed over night against Jericho. And the priest that bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground. . . until all the nation were passed clean over the Jordan.”

B. The Sages of Israel added: On the tenth day of the month of Nisan the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan. On every other occasion in its journeyings the ark was carried by two standard-bearers, but on the day of crossing the Jordan it took the lead itself. On all other occasions the Levites went with the ark, but on that occasion the priests went with it.

Rabbi Eleazar, the son of Simeon, said: The water of the Jordan formed itself into arches more than three hundred miles in height, which were seen by all the kings of the East and the West.

“Whoever sees the fords of Jordan should give praise and glory to his Creator!”

## 82. THE SPRING OF ELISHA

Near the city of Jericho flows a spring, which is called by the Arabs, *'Ain al-Sultan*, the fountain of the Sultan. It is the famous spring of the prophet Elisha.

Once Elisha came to the city of Jericho. "And the men of the city said unto Elisha: 'Behold, we pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; but the water is bad, and the land miscarrieth.' And he said: 'Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein.' And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast salt therein, and said: 'Thus saith the Lord: I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or miscarrying.' So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke."¹

### 83. THE BUBBLING FOUNT

In the bed of the rocky ravine of Kelt, which is east of Jerusalem by the Jericho road, there is a fountain called by the Arabs '*Ain Fuwzr*, the bubbling fount. See Fig. 28. Its waters are soft and very pleasant, but they have one remarkable quality. They do not flow steadily and continuously, but at times they disappear into the bowels of the earth and are completely lost to sight.

If you stand and watch these waters in surprise, as

¹The pilgrim from Bordeaux, who visited Palestine in the year 333 C. E., writes: "A mile and a half from the town of Jericho, is the fountain of Elisha. Formerly if any woman drank of it, she did not bear children. Beside it lies an earthenware vessel. Elisha threw salt into it, and came and stood over the fountain and said: Thus saith the Lord, I have cleansed these waters and if any woman drink of this fountain, she shall bear children."

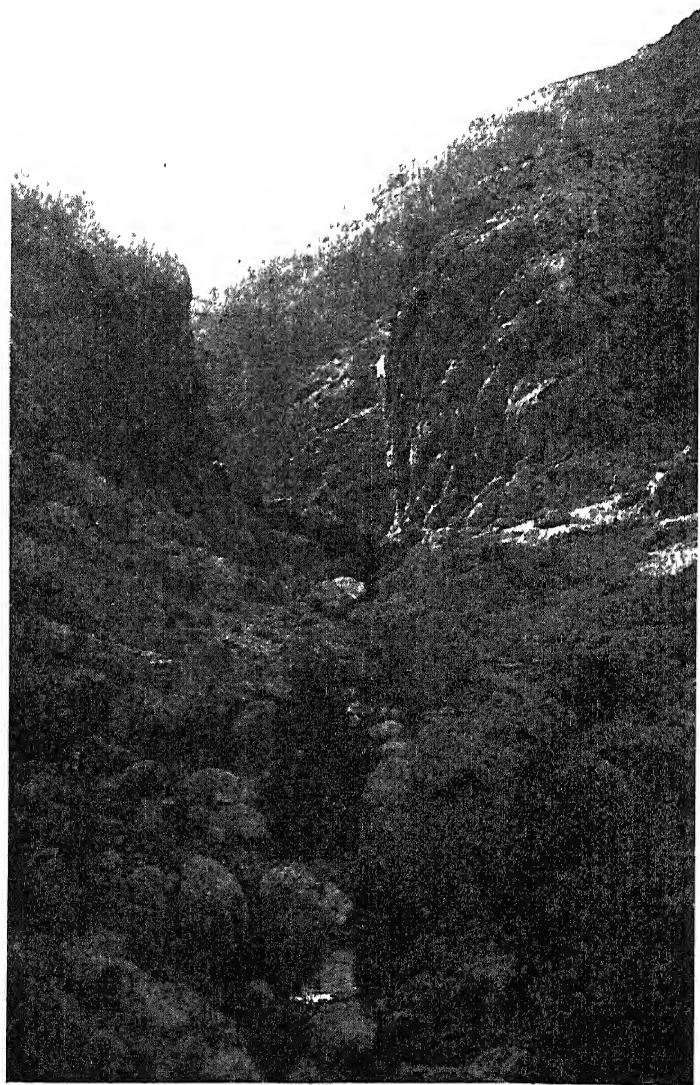


Fig. 28: The Ravine of Kelt

well you may, the Arabs will tell you the following story:

When Allah created heaven and earth, he created the demons and spirits according to their various kinds and, gathering them all together, he appointed them to their respective positions and spheres of work upon earth. Now when Allah had ended, there came two spirits who had been far away. One was black as a negro, and evil in deed, whose name was "Slave" (*Abed*). The other was pure white and goodhearted, and was named "Free" (*Hur*). So they came to Allah to be given their positions, and there was only one place left, the fountain of the ravine of Kelt. So Allah said: "Since you are late and there is only one vacant fountain left, let it belong to him who first reaches it. Hurry thither!" So they hastened and, reaching the fountain together, leapt into it and dwelt there together. Since, however, they are entirely different in character, they cannot dwell in peace, and there is eternal warfare between them. When the good white demon "Free" prevails, he sends the brook out into the open, so that men can assuage their thirst with the sweet waters. When the black evil demon "Slave" prevails, the waters stop and he hides them under the ground, so that men should receive no use or pleasure from them.

This battle of the demons will not cease so long as good and evil, day and night, strive with each other upon earth, and so the constantly recurring changes in the flow of water will go on for ever.

## 84. THE HAUNTED FOUNTAIN

Rabbi Berechiah tells the following story:

The fountain of our city was haunted by a spirit. One day another spirit came and tried to drive it away. In our city dwelt a pious man, whose name was Rabbi Jose of Zaitor. The spirit of the fountain came to him and said: "I have dwelt many years in this fountain, and neither by night nor by day have I harmed anyone. Now a strange spirit seeks to drive me forth and he will do evil unto you."

"What is to be done?" asked Rabbi Jose. The spirit answered: "Take your sticks and your sickles and go forth in the daytime to the spring and shout: 'Ours have conquered! Ours have conquered!' and he will run away."

They did this and the evil spirit fled. It is said that the people did not leave the spring, till a clot of blood appeared upon the surface of the waters . . .

## 85. THE ASCENT OF ADUMMIM

In ancient times the first day of the month was determined by the appearance of the new moon. Those who witnessed this used to come and report to an assembly of sages of Israel (*Sanhedrin*), and thus the beginnings of the months were fixed.

A. There was a large court in Jerusalem which was called the House of Ya'zek, because the calculation of the calendar was settled (in Hebrew: *'azaḳ*) there.

Thither came all those who had witnessed the appearance of the new moon. A great feast was prepared for these witnesses and each man was called and asked the following questions: How did you see the moon? Was it before sunset or after? To the north of the sun or to the south? How high was it? . . . and so on. And according to the evidence of these witnesses the first day of the month was fixed.

B. These witnesses usually came from the high places in the land, as from there wider horizons could be scanned.

West of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho, there is a mountain slope called: *Ma'aleh Adummim*, the ascent of blood, thus called because the earth there has a reddish tinge. This slope was the dividing line between the territories of Judah and Benjamin. From the top of the ascent of Adummim, a wide landscape stretches before the eye.

The following story is related of a certain man who was paid 200 pieces of silver to deceive the assembly (*Sanhedrin*). He came to them and said: "As I was ascending the *Ma'aleh Adummim*, I saw the moon crouching between two rocks. Her head was like unto a calf, her ears like a kid, and her horns like a gazelle, whilst she appeared as if she had a tail between her legs. I peeped at her, and was so terrified that I fell backwards. It may be that you do not believe me. But what is that to me? Have I not received 200 pieces of silver for telling you this?"



## 86. THE ROCK OF THE BACKS

To the left of the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, after passing the spring called by the Christians the Spring of the Apostles and in Arabic '*Ain al-Hod*, the spring of the trough, there is a rock famous for its cure of backache and therefore called in Arabic: *Abu al-Dahur*, the father of the backs.

After a patient has rubbed his back against the rock, he places a stone on it to commemorate his visit and goes his way in the full belief that he is cured.

## XI. THE DESERT OF JUDAH

THE SAGES OF ISRAEL SAID:

"IT IS BETTER TO SLEEP IN THE DESERTS  
OF PALESTINE THAN TO ABIDE IN THE  
PALACES OF OTHER LANDS."



## 87. THE CAVE OF THE SPIDER

David the shepherd king used to wander about in the desert of Judah, which stretches to the east of Bethlehem, his native town. The days of his childhood were spent in following his flock through valleys of the wilderness and over the heights of the mountains of Judea. His nights he spent in the many caves of the hills.

The Lord saw that David was an excellent shepherd. For he used to range his flock according to their age. In the early morning he would set the young kids to pasture so that they could eat the tender tops of the grass, then he took the goats to feed on the blades, and lastly the rams, who were strong and able to feed on the stocks of the grass.

The shepherd David once watched a spider spinning its web, and he said: "Lord of the Universe, what is the purpose of the things Thou hast created? What is the use of the spider which spins all the year round to no purpose or end?" The Lord said, "David! You mock at My creatures now, but a time will come when you will have need of them and then you will see why they were created."

The time came when David fled before Saul and hid in a cave. The Lord then sent a spider, which spun a web across the entrance, closing it. When Saul saw

the web he said, "He could not have gone in here, for he would have broken the web," and he passed by. When David came forth he kissed the spider, crying, "Blessed art thou and blessed is thy Maker! Thou alone hast saved my life."

## 88. THE CAVE OF THE SHEPHERD

There is a cave in the Judean wilderness called the Cave of the Shepherd. The bedouins tell of a certain shepherd who had a sister named Waddah. Once he went out with his flock. As he sat in the cave at noon drowsing and content, two hundred and fifty brigands with guns fell upon him. They seized him, bound him tight and cast him into the depths of the cave. Then they slew a ram and some goats, kindled a fire and prepared a meal. Then the shepherd called to them, "I am in your hands; loosen me, I pray you, and I will pipe pleasing songs to you." So they freed his hands and let him pipe, saying, "How can one man harm us"?

And the shepherd piped this song:

"O sister Waddah, they have slain my flock's ram and have burnt my sheep pen."

His sister heard the song and understood that her brother was in distress. And she said to her father, "Enemies are fallen upon my brother and have slain the ram of the flocks and have burnt the pens. Gather the men together and go forth to the foe!"

The father gathered his men and they went forth to the cave. There they fell upon the robbers, slew many

of them and delivered the shepherd. And since then the spot is known as *Magharat Al-Ra'i*, The Cave of the Shepherd.

### 89. THE CLIFF OF THE DESERT

A. In the wilderness of Judah there are many barren hills with very steep slopes (see Fig. 29). One of these



Fig. 29: The Cliff of the Desert

was called in Hebrew *ha-Zuk*, the Cliff. Every Day of Atonement the scapegoat sent to Azazel was brought thither and cast down, as it is written in the book of Moses:

“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of an appointed man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land which is cut off, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”

B. There were ten booths between Jerusalem and the cliff. When the scapegoat was conducted into the wilderness, the aristocracy of Jerusalem escorted him to the first booth. At each stage they said to the scapegoat, “Here is food and water,” and accompanied it to the next booth, and so from stage to stage till they reached the last. What did he who sat in the last booth do? He divided the scarlet strip into two parts; one piece he fastened to the rock and the other he twisted round the horns of the goat and then pushed the goat backwards. The goat rolled down and was shattered to pieces ere it had got half way down the precipice of the cliff.

How did the inhabitants of Jerusalem know that the goat had reached the desert? Signal posts were set up on the wayside. When the goat reached the wilderness,

each one waved his cloak to the other till the signal reached Jerusalem. There was also another sign. A crimson strip was tied to the entrance of the Temple, and when the goat reached the wilderness, this strip turned white.

## 90. SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Ezekiel the prophet said: "Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate!"

A. The Lord said: "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me. And Abraham drew near and said: Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt Thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? And the Lord said: If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, I will not destroy it . . . I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned unto his place. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground . . . And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he stood



before the Lord and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain and behold, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (see Fig. 30).

B. The Sages of Israel related: A man entered Sodom riding on an ass, and as he had no lodging he was received by a resident of the place. On preparing to depart he missed his colored cover and the cord by which it had been tied to the animal's back. When he asked his host about the matter, he received the answer that he had only dreamed of a cover, but that the vision was of good omen, since the cover meant that he would possess large vineyards, and the cord indicated that his life would be prolonged. The stranger protested, but he was dragged before the tribunal and sentenced to pay four silver shekels.

There were four judges in Sodom named respectively: Liar (*Shakkarai*), Habitual Liar (*Shakrarai*), Deceiver (*Zayafa*), and Preventer of the Law (*Nazle Dina*).

C. The men of Sodom used to place a guest on a bed specially constructed so that if the guest was too tall they cut off his limbs till they were short enough to fit the bed; and if he was too short, they stretched his limbs till they were long enough.

Another custom in Sodom was that he who invited a stranger to a wedding forfeited his coat. Once Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, came to Sodom. Being very hungry, he entered a house where a wedding was being celebrated, but could get nothing to eat. He

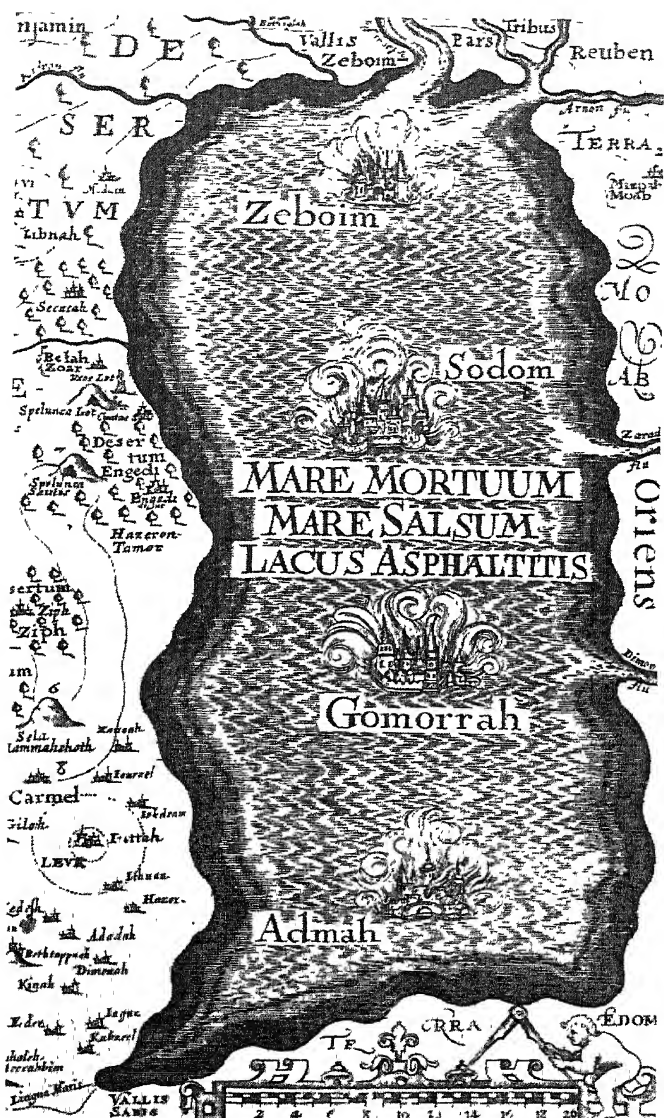


Fig. 30: The Dead Sea (1650)

then sat down next one of the wedding guests. On being asked by his neighbor who had invited him, he replied: "You did." The latter, fearing to lose his coat, left the house precipitately. Eliezer then sat near another, on whom he played the same trick, with the same result, until at last he had succeeded in driving all the guests out of the house. He then secured the meal for himself.

D. The inhabitants of the cities of the plain worshiped the sun and the moon. If destruction had come upon them by day, they would have said that the moon would have helped them; if by night, they would have declared that the sun would have been their aid; wherefore they were destroyed in the morning twilight when both the sun and the moon were shining.

When the Messiah comes, even Sodom and Gomorrah will be rebuilt and will flourish!

## 91. THE WIFE OF LOT

"A standing pillar of salt is a monument of an unbelieving soul."

A. "And there came two angels to Sodom . . . And the men said unto Lot . . . whatsoever thou hast in the city bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spoke unto his sons-in-law, who married his daughters, and

said: 'Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city.' But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, 'Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here: lest they be consumed in the iniquity of the city . . . Escape for thy life: look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountains lest thou be consumed . . . But his wife looked back from behind him and she became a pillar of salt.'

B. Why was Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt and not that of any other mineral? Asked the Sages of Israel. Because salt was the cause of her sin.

On the night that the angels came to Lot, his wife, wishing to show her neighbors how hospitable she was, went to them and shouted, "Send me some salt, I have visitors." And so the people knew that visitors were at the house of Lot, and they came to attack them. For that reason Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt.

C. A Jewish traveler, Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Palestine about the year 1163, writes: "Two parasangs from the Dead Sea stands the salt pillar into which Lot's wife was changed; and although the sheep continually lick it, the pillar grows again and retains its original size."

On the eastern coast of the Dead Sea, south of the river of Arnon, there is a hill with a tall isolated rock,

which bears a resemblance to a woman with a child upon her shoulder (see Fig. 31). The bedouins call this



Fig. 31: The Wife of Lot

rock: *Bint Sheikh Lut*, the daughter of sheikh Lot, or *Marat Lut*, the wife of Lot. Near it there is another rock resembling a crouching dog which is called *Kalb Lut*, the Dog of Lot. It is said that this is one of the dogs belonging to Lot which was turned to stone . . .

## 92. THE POOL OF ABRAHAM

Near Engeddi, the fountain of the kid, close to the Dead Sea on the way to the fortress Masada, there is a small pool which is called *Birkat al-Khalil*, the Pool of Abraham.

One day Abraham rode on his donkey to the Dead Sea to obtain a supply of salt, which was collected and sold there by the inhabitants. Abraham saw a pool and noted that people from Hebron were working near it. He approached them and asked for salt. The laborers rudely answered that they had no salt to sell, although a large quantity was lying about at the time. Irritated at their insolence, Abraham replied: "Henceforth in this place, which I curse, ye shall have neither salt nor a road to Hebron." In an instant, the salt, although retaining its original appearance, turned into gravel, and the road to Hebron became practically impassable.

Since that time the people have called this pool: *Birkat al-Khalil*, the pool of Abraham, and the name remains till this very day.

### 93. THE MOSQUE OF TRUTH

On the way from Hebron to the Dead Sea, on the borders of the Desert of Judah, there is a village called Beni Nayim. Here is found the tomb of Lot (*Nabi Lut*) in a little mosque. From here can be seen the desert where Lot rambled with his flocks, and beyond it the Dead Sea, called by the Arabs *Bahairat Lut*, the little sea of Lot.

To the south of Beni Nayim, on a high hill, there is another holy tomb called *Nabi Yakin*, the prophet Yakin, identified by some with Cain, the son of Adam.

It is related that here stood Abraham and observed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. As it is written in the book of Genesis: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord. And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the plain, and lo and behold, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

The Arabs relate that when Abraham saw this destruction, he exclaimed: Verily, I now bear witness, for the word of the Lord is Truth (in Arabic: *yakin*), and therefore this place was called: *Al-Masjid al-Yakin*, the Mosque of Truth.

In a room of the Mosque is shown a rock encircled with an iron frame. On the rock are seen the impressions of two feet and of two hands. This is said to be the bedstead of Abraham, who left these impressions.

## XII. JAFFA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

JAFFA WAS CREATED BEFORE THE FLOOD  
OF NOAH.

JAFFA IS THE GATEWAY OF ZION.





## 94. HOW JAFFA WAS CAPTURED

Many, many ages ago, before Israel had yet entered the Land, there lived a mighty king in Egypt who on several occasions attempted to subdue Jaffa, which was a very important port in the ancient world. But his project never succeeded.

Once a certain officer approached the king and promised that Jaffa could be taken by him if only the king gave him his scepter. The scepter was given to the officer, who concealed it amid his belongings. Then he prepared to visit the "accursed lord of Jaffa," and ere he went he prepared 500 great jars. He hid 200 men-at-arms in a like number of jars and in the others he concealed ropes and yokes for warfare. And his men sealed the jars and bore them to the vicinity of Jaffa.

The officer, with a small retinue, then appeared before the ruler of Jaffa, who received them all very hospitably and prepared a fine feast for them. When the ruler had made himself drunk, the officer told him that he and his few companions were fleeing from the army of Egypt, having despoiled the land; and that they had hidden their booty in the great jars which were already near the town. Furthermore, he had succeeded in stealing the king's very scepter. When the governor saw the scepter he believed the officer, and did not

therefore instruct his men to guard the city against the new arrivals. He also allowed the officer to bring his 500 jars of booty into the town. While his men busied themselves with the jars, the officer rose and said to the governor, "Here is the scepter of the august lion-eyed king of Egypt, whose father Amon gave him might and power!" And raising it, he smote the governor on the temple, so that he fell and perished.

The officer went to his men at once and bade them open the jars. The 200 men leapt forth, seized the guard of the city and bound them with the ropes and the yokes. And in this simple way was the fort of Jaffa taken.

Then the officer wrote thus to the king of Egypt: "Rejoice in your lot! Amon, your benevolent father, has given you Jaffa and the dwellers therein. Send men now and take them into captivity and fill the temple of Amon your father, king of the gods, with menservants and maidservants prostrating themselves at your feet forever!"

## 95. THE MIRACLE AT JAFFA

King Herod built a new temple on Mount Moriah, and the magnates of Judea offered silver and gold for the needs of the building; and when the building was completed it was said, "He who hath not seen Herod's Temple hath never seen a noble edifice!"

In Alexandria of Egypt, there lived a wealthy Jew

named Nikanor. When he heard of the rebuilding of the Temple, he prepared two magnificent doors for the entrance to the Holy of Holies. Each door was made of copper inset with panels of gold and silver, all of the finest craftsmanship. The height was fifty cubits and the width forty cubits. Their weight was such that it took twenty men to carry one.

The doors were set on a ship to be taken to Jaffa, whence they would be borne to Jerusalem; and Nikanor himself accompanied his gift. While on the sea, a great storm arose and the ship well nigh foundered under its burden. In face of this peril, sailors threw one door overboard to lighten the boat. But the storm increased and they wished to cast the other overboard as well. Then Nikanor embraced the door and said in anguish, "Men! If you cast this door overboard, my life is no life! Cast me with it!" And at these words the storm subsided and the sea ceased raging.

The ship reached Jaffa at length, Nikanor weeping and lamenting the portal which had sunk. But when they neared the port, a miracle happened. Something began to foam amid the waves and breakers, and the lost portal suddenly emerged.

Both the portals were joyfully borne up to Jerusalem, where they were set up in the gate of the Temple known to all as the Gate of Nikanor.

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## 96. THE SEA OF JAFFA

On a hill is built Jaffa, one of the oldest towns of the world (see Fig. 32). It is said to have been called in

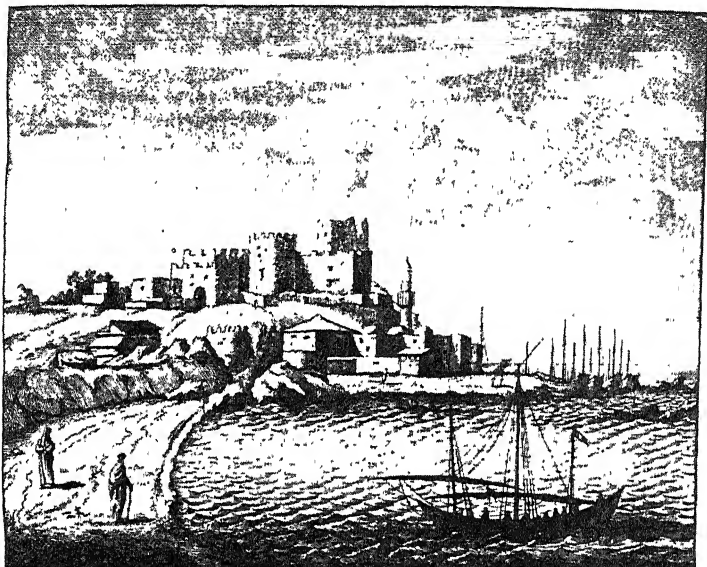


Fig. 32: Jaffa in the Olden Days (1681)

Hebrew *Yafa* from the word *yafeh*, the beautiful. It is also said that the town was built before the flood of Noah, and that here Noah built the ark and went into it. At the same place, afterwards, his bones were deposited. Others say that Jaffa was called after Japheth, the son of Noah.

The Sages of Israel relate: The sea of Jaffa is set aside for the saints in days to come. How is this known?

All the ships that are lost in the Great Sea, containing silver, gold, jewels and all fine things, will be projected by it into the sea of Jaffa and these treasures are set aside for the righteous of the future ages.

When the Messiah appears in the Land of Israel, the Lord God will give the righteous wealth untold. For in whatever sea gold, silver and jewels are sunk, that sea is sworn to bring it all to the sea of Jaffa. Whatever was sunk from the six days of the creation of the world until the time of King Solomon, was washed up at Jaffa for Solomon, and it was in this manner that he gained his wealth.

From the death of Solomon until now and until the ingathering of the exiles of Israel, all the treasures which have been sunk, will be brought to the sea of Jaffa, which will project it forth upon the dry land. And the Messiah will apportion it to each righteous man according to his merits . . .

## 97. THE ROCK OF ANDROMEDA

In ancient times a fearsome dragon lived in the sea of Jaffa and cast his dread over all the sailors. He caused great storms, sank ships and destroyed many lives. But if a human sacrifice of the most beautiful girl in Jaffa was made to the dragon he would, for a year, leash the tempests and protect the sailors and such as go down to the sea in ships.

Once the beautiful Andromeda, the daughter of

Cepheus, was taken to a certain rock and chained there as an offering to this dragon, lord of the sea. But when the dragon approached to receive his gift, Perseus her lover appeared, riding on a winged horse, slew the

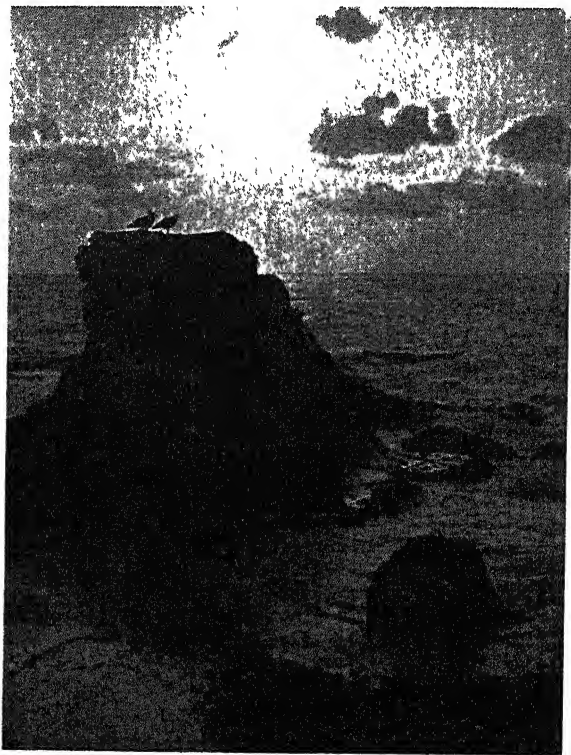


Fig. 33: The Rock of Andromeda

dragon, snapped Andromeda's chains and delivered her. For many ages the relics of these chains were shown on a certain rock at Jaffa, and once one of the

monster's ribs was found and taken to Rome, where it was a nine days' wonder.

The Greek geographer Pausanias, of the second century, who traveled in Palestine, writes:

"Red water, red as blood, may be seen in the land of the Hebrews, near the city of Jaffa. The water is hard by the sea, and the local legend runs that when Perseus had slain the sea-beast, to which the daughter of Cepheus was exposed, he washed off the blood at this spring."

Among the rocks guarding the harbor of Jaffa, you can still see a particularly lofty and black rock, which is that of beautiful Andromeda (see Fig. 33).

## 98. THE CURSE OF THE GOVERNOR

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Mohammed Aghar Abu-Nabbut, father of the oak club, was the Governor of Jaffa. He was thus known because whenever he walked in the street he carried with him his staff of authority. He was a very good and just ruler, who built many fine buildings, including the big mosque named after him. He always strove to improve the town and better its inhabitants, and his fame spread far and wide. Under his rule the population and prosperity of Jaffa increased greatly. And all men blessed Abu-Nabbut.

In those days Jaffa was walled and fortified, its gates being shut every night at sundown. Hence all



who reached the town after sunset had to stay outside the wall, in the open, till the dawn of day.

Now one day the governor Abu-Nabbut went out of the town and walked a long distance amid the orchards. When he returned, the sun had already set and the gates were closed. So Abu-Nabbut knocked at the gate and called the guards to open; but none answered. He shouted in wrath, "I am Abu-Nabbut, the governor; open the gates and let me in!" But there was no answer save laughter behind the walls. Abu-Nabbut thought the watch did not believe him, so he entreated, "Send to my house and ask if the governor is at home; then you will know I speak truth." But of this they took no heed. So he was not allowed to enter, but had to stay outside the town the whole night long.

When Abu-Nabbut entered the town on the morrow, he summoned all the inhabitants, told them his tale, and bitterly upbraided them for their boorish behavior. And he issued this proclamation: "Cursed be the man, and cursed be his father, who joins himself to a man of Jaffa." In order to set in full view the ill heart and boorishness of all Jaffa men, he ordered those words to be engraved on a stone on the Jaffa-Jerusalem road, so that all passers-by might see, and Jaffa and the dwellers therein might be eternally shamed.

On the road from Jaffa, ere you reach the Jewish Agricultural School Mikveh-Israel, they show you an inscription. It is on the three-domed building which is called in Arabic *Sebil* (the well of) *Abu-Nabbut*

(see Fig. 34), and according to what men say, it contains the governor's curse, "Accursed is he and cursed be his father, who joins the men of Jaffa."

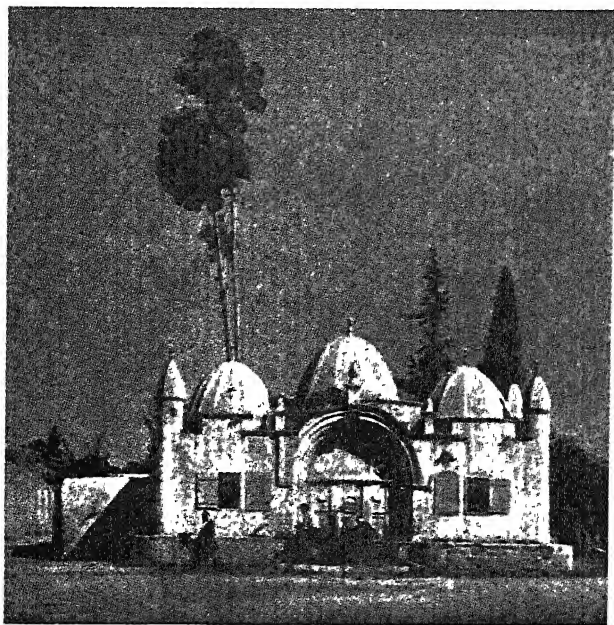


Fig. 34: The Well of Abu Nabbut

## 99. THE MOUNT OF NAPOLEON

In the year 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte came with his soldiers to Jaffa and laid siege to the city in an attempt to break through the walls and conquer it. But he did not succeed, for the Turks were well fortified in the high hill of Jaffa. The environs of Jaffa are so flat that Napoleon was unable to find a hill or mound from

which he could attack the city. And Napoleon perceived that he would be unable to conquer the city unless he could raise some mound on which a stronghold could be built for his army.

And he said to himself: If God did not raise mountains here, I will do so now. He then ordered his men to build a hill. The men toiled through the night so as not to be seen by the Turks, and so they raised a hill for their stronghold. That is the little mountain known as the Hill of Napoleon which is close to the water of the river Yarkon, north of Jaffa (see Fig. 35).



Fig. 35: The Mount of Napoleon

## 100. THE VILLAGE OF BENE-BERAK

In the neighborhood of the colony of Bene-Berak which is near Tel Aviv, there was once a famous town of that name. A great Jewish community lived there,

and there was also the famous school of Rabbi Akiba, which produced many scholars and wise men. The surroundings were very fruitful, with its fields of corn, its vineyards and its orchards.

It is related of Rami, the son of Ezekiel, who came to Bene-Berak, that he saw goats browsing under fig trees, and the honey that dripped from the figs mingled with the milk from the goats. Said Rami: "This is what is meant by a 'land flowing with milk and honey'."

During the first days of the Passover, it is customary for the Jews to relate the miracles and the events which happened to the children of Israel in Egypt, and whoever dilates on the narrative of the departure from Egypt is accounted praiseworthy. The story is told of certain rabbis who, being entertained at Bene-Berak, were telling the narrative of the departure from Egypt all that night until their disciples came and said unto them: "Masters, the time has arrived to read the morning prayers!"

## 101. THE VILLAGE OF SALAMAH

The Arab village Salamah is concealed among the orange groves of Jaffa. In its mosque is the grave of Sheikh Salamah, by whose name the village is known.

In former times war broke out in this neighborhood between the Moslems and the Unbelievers. The war was waged with ceaseless ferocity and many fell on both sides. But the victory was slow in coming, for

the forces were very well balanced. At the head of the faithful was a certain holy dervish who fought with Allah's name on his lips. And when he saw that his force could not subdue the foe, he grieved and fasted and prayed for many days.

Shortly before that time, a son had been born to a barren old woman in the hamlet nearby. The child was very handsome and the wisdom of God shone in his eyes. The boy grew big and was the delight of his mother, who could not endure to be without him.

One night an angel of God appeared to the dervish and said, "God has heard your prayer; go now to the village, where you will find an old woman who has an only son born in her old age. Take this lad, put the standard of the faithful in his hands and set him on the field at the head of your men. And Allah shall be with him, and through him will you prevail. And you will smite your foes and root out their remnant from the land."

In the morning the dervish rose and hastened down to the village, where he sought the woman and, coming to her, said: "Give me your son to be our standard-bearer in the battle, for without him the faithful fail and fall." But the woman refused to give her son, saying, "Indeed you must know that he is my only son and our souls are knit together; and should ill befall him in the battle, I shall go down in sorrow to the grave."

The dervish responded, "I swear by Allah that I

shall bring the lad back hale as I take him; and you can demand him from me. But now do the will of Allah and do not fear that any evil can befall those who serve him." And he swore that he would bring the lad back whole. And the woman hearkened to him and kissed her son farewell and gave him to the dervish.

The next day, battle was joined anew with yet more vigor, and the lad went before the army of the faithful with the standard. And there was a great onset, and the corpses on the battlefield far outnumbered those of previous battles; and only at evening did the faithful drive the foe from the field, and utterly destroyed them.

At night the dervish saw that the lad had not returned; and he trembled greatly and went forth to seek him amid the dead. For many hours the dervish searched through the darkness, and only at dawn did he find the lad lying on the ground drenched in blood and expiring. And the dervish cried out bitterly, for he remembered the oath he had sworn to the lad's mother. And he kneeled and prayed with tearful eyes that God should not allow him to break the oath sworn by his sacred name. And Allah hearkened to the dervish's prayer, and the lad rose to his feet and came to life anew.

Then the dervish took the boy in his arms and hastened with him to the village, took him to his mother and said, "Behold, I have brought your son. As God lives, I took him hale and have brought him hale." And the woman rejoiced and stretched out her

arms to take the lad and clasp him to her bosom. And as she took the lad, he gave his soul back to God and died.

And the Arabs sanctified his name, so that he became a saint unto them. And they called him Sheikh Salamah, meaning "Peace." He is the saint of the village Salamah which is still called by his name.

## 102. THE VILLAGE OF ZARNUKA

Near the Jewish colony Rehoboth, on the way to the colony Gederah, stands an Arab village called Zarnuka or Zarnuga (see Fig. 36). It is probably the site of the city of Shikkeron belonging to the tribe of Judah, and in talmudic times the town Zarnuka stood here, whence came the scholar Rabbi Hiyya bar Zarnuka.

In olden times this village had another name which no one now remembers. Once war began in the district between the Moslems and the Unbelievers (*Kuffar*). One of the Unbelievers slew the chief of the Moslems as he rode on a she-camel. Some say that this leader was Hussein, son of the holy Ali, but there is no foundation for this; for, as is well known, he was slain in Mesopotamia. You may indeed be told that his head is buried by the ruins of Ashkelon; but this is just an idle tale which only the ignorant masses believe.

The camel which bore the body of the Moslem commander became frightened at the tumult of the battle and fled wildly to the hills, so that none could

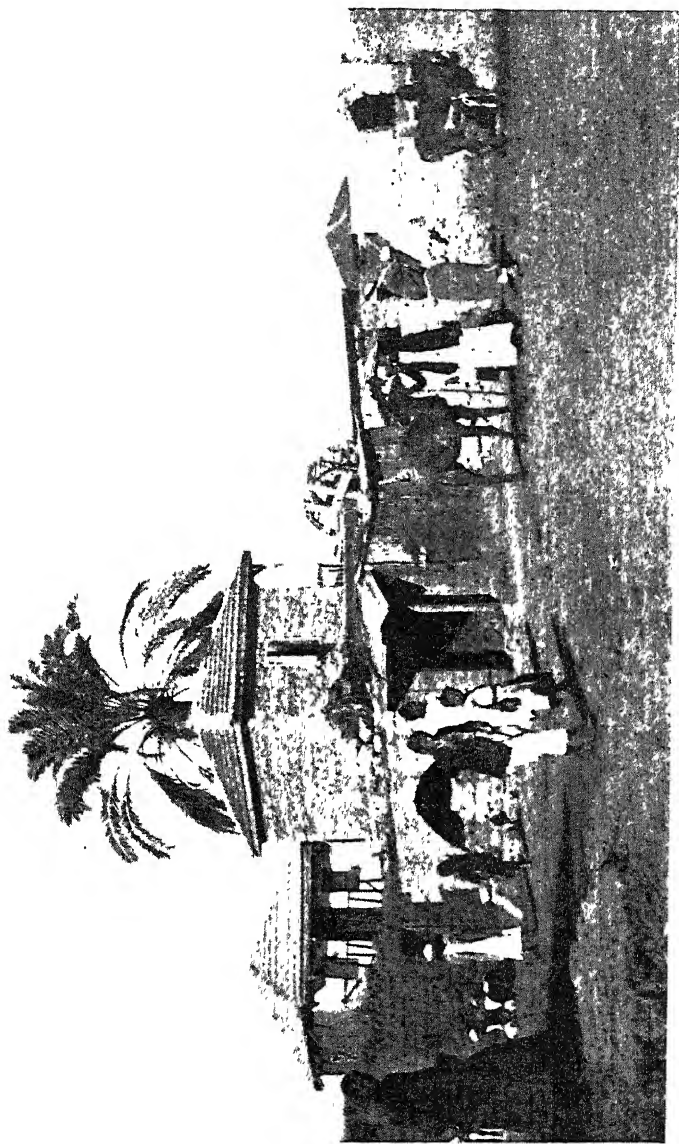


Fig. 36: The Village of Zarnuka



catch her and take the body from her back. At length the camel came to a certain village where she rested, and the inhabitants removed the body and buried it. Since then the name of this village was changed and it is called Zarnuka, visit of the camel (*zar*, meaning in Arabic visit, and *nuka*, she-camel). And since then the original name has been forgotten, but the new one has remained.

### 103. THE VILLAGE OF ZERIFIN

In the neighborhood of the town of Ramleh, on the highroad to Jaffa, there is a village called Serafend, well known as a military center during the British conquest. This is the site of an ancient Jewish village Gagot-Zerifin, "the roofs of the cottages."

In the olden days the corn of Gagot-Zerifin was praised throughout the land and it ripened earlier than the corn growing on the hills round Jerusalem. It was the custom of Israel to bring the Omer, which was a bundle of the sheaves of the first corn, as an offering into the Temple, as it is written in the Holy Law: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them: 'When ye be come into the land which I give unto you and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest

shall wave it and ye shall eat neither bread nor parched corn, nor fresh ears until this selfsame day, until ye have bought the oblation of your God. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings'."

The Sages of Israel said that for preference the Omer should be brought from the neighborhood of Jerusalem. When, however, the corn round about Jerusalem had not ripened, then it was permitted to bring corn from other parts of the land. Once the Omer came from the village Gagot-Zerifin, and this is how it came about.

One year as the time for the offering of the Omer approached and the corn of Jerusalem had not yet ripened, they did not know whence to bring the Omer. The priest of the Temple, therefore, issued a proclamation:—"The time of the Omer is nigh, let therefore whatever place in Israel hath its corn ripe bring the Omer to the Temple!"

A man who was dumb of speech came to the courtyard of the Temple and stood before the priests. He stretched forth one hand to the roofs (in Hebrew: *Gagot*), and the other hand to some neighboring cottages (in Hebrew: *Zerifin*). The priests could not understand what the afflicted of God meant till a servant of the Temple named Pethahiah came forward and said: "Look where this dumb man points with his hands; he points to the roofs (*Gagot*) and to the cottages (*Zerifin*). Is there a place in the Land of Israel known as Gagot-Zerifin or Zerifin-Gagot?"

They searched and found that there was a place called Gagot-Zerifin. Accordingly in that year they went to this village and brought the Omer to the Temple.

#### 104. THE OVER-TURNED CISTERN

In the city of Ramlah, there is a cistern called by the Arabs *al-Anaiziyyah* and by the Christians the cistern of Saint Helene. This cistern is covered by a roof. Should you ask why this cistern is covered when cisterns are always open, the townsmen will tell you this tale: In days gone by there was a wealthy princess who did much charitable work in Ramlah and spent much money in beautifying the town. There was but one fault in this princess. She did not believe in God and, trusting to her wealth and wisdom, was very proud of herself.

Now in Ramlah there are no springs of fresh water issuing from the earth; there are only pits whence the men of Ramlah obtain their water supply. Once the princess decided to remedy this state of affairs; so she assembled a great number of slaves, whom she ordered to dig an aqueduct from the large spring *'Ain-Warda* near the ruined city of Gezer to the city of Ramlah. And in Ramlah she built a fine cistern to hold this spring-water. The labor was slow and she spent much money upon it.

When the cistern was completed, the princess went to inspect it and took pride in her work and was very

much pleased with herself. Just then a holy dervish passed by and greeted her, saying: "O princess, give praise to Allah who aided you to bring your thought to fruition, and by whose might you have done all this." And he pointed to the big cistern.

The princess answered, "Nay, holy man, it is my money that did it" . . . The words had scarcely passed her lips when the cistern was turned upside down and its bottom became its ceiling. The cistern is sometimes called also, "The Cistern of the Unbelieving Woman."

#### 105. THE MARTYRS OF LUDD

It is told by the Sages of Israel that a certain great lady, a daughter of Caesar, was killed and it was not known who killed her. The heathens said, "This can only have been done by Israel; for the Jews are our foes." So they decreed the slaughter of all Israel.

Now there were two brothers in the city of Ludd; and when they knew of this, they, being zealous for the Lord, denounced themselves for the sanctity of His holy name and gave themselves up for execution. They went and said to the heathens, "Why have ye decreed against Israel thus? We alone killed her."

When they heard this they annulled the decree against Israel and imprisoned these two brothers. What did they do to them? They tortured them and each day they tore some flesh from them, piece by piece, limb by limb, so that they should die in agony and torture.

And because of their heroic deed in sacrificing themselves to save Israel, the sages say, "There is no creature that can stand within the bounds of the martyrs of Ludd."

## 106. THE CAVE OF LUDD

In the environs of Ludd, at the foot of the mountains of Judah, there are a number of caves, in one of which occurred the following:—

Rabbi Joshua the son of Levi stood with Elijah the Prophet on Mount Carmel and said to him: "Peradventure you can show me the precious stones from which the Temple will be built at the end of time." And Elijah answered him: "I will show them to you," and he showed them to him by means of a miracle.

A boat was sailing on the high seas when a whirlwind caught it up and it was in great danger. On the boat there was a Jewish lad to whom Elijah appeared and said: "If you will fulfill my task, I will save this boat for you." The lad agreed, whereupon Elijah said to him: "Go to Rabbi Joshua the son of Levi, who lives in the great city of Ludd, and show him these precious stones. But take heed that you show them to him not in the town, but in the cave outside the town."

The lad came to Ludd and said to Rabbi Joshua the son of Levi: "Follow me." When they reached the cave, he showed him the precious stones, and immediately the whole of Ludd became illuminated from the brightness of these wondrous stones.

### XIII. THE MOUNTAINS OF JUDEA

“THE PROPHET ELIJAH WILL APPEAR  
ON THE MOUNTAIN OF JUDEA AND WILL  
SAY:

YE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL, HOW  
LONG MUST YE CONTINUE DRIED UP  
AND DESOLATE!”



## 107. THE ASCENT OF BETH-HORON

On one of the slopes of the hills of Judea which overlooks the plain of Ludd, is to be found the village of lower Beth-Horon (Beit-Ur al-Tahta) and above it another village, upper Beth-Horon (Beit-Ur al-Foka). The ascent from the lower village to the upper is very steep. It forms part of the high road from Jerusalem to Ludd, which was in ancient times the principal highway between the mountains and the sea plain. On the ascent of Beth-Horon many battles took place, from the first days since Israel came to the land, during the revolt of the Maccabees, and during the British conquest.

A. In the book of Joshua we read: "And the Lord discomfited them (the kings of Canaan) before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them by way of the ascent of Beth-Horon, and smote them . . . And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel while they were in the going down of Beth-Horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them. They were more which died from the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. Then spoke Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel:



'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon  
And thou, Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon!'

And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies."

The Sages of Israel say: He who witnesses the hail-stones upon the ascent of Beth-Horon should give praise and glory to the Creator.<sup>1</sup>

B. It is said by the Sages that if two camels go up the ascent of Beth-Horon side by side, they will fall; but if one follows the other, they can ascend in safety.

The story is told of a certain rock standing upon the ascent of Beth-Horon, which was supposed to be a place of impurity but which could not be investigated because of the steepness of the place. An old man said to the people: "Bring me a sheet of linen." This they brought and dipping it in water, he spread it over the rock. The sheet remained moist in parts, thus proving

<sup>1</sup> Joshua, the son of Nun, was buried "in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-Serah, which is in Mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash." Why was this hill called *har-Ga'ash*, the hill of earthquake? The sages of Israel said: In the days of Joshua's death, Israel did not mourn enough for their leader, therefore He caused the mountain to quake in order to kill the people. Rabbi Pethahiah relates: "In the midst of the mountain, Joshua the son of Nun is buried . . . there are beautiful palaces erected near the graves . . . Near one of the palaces a foot-print is perceptible, like that of a human being treading on snow. This is that which the angel imprinted after the death of Joshua, when the land of Israel suffered earthquake."

Joshua was buried in Timnath-Serah or Heres, now the village Kufer Harres in the mountains of Samaria. The Sages of Israel asked: Why was it called Timnath-Heres, the Timna of the Sun? Because of the carving of the sun which was upon the tomb of Joshua. All who passed by said: This is the man who stopped the sun! Pity on this man who did so great a thing and now lies dead in the gravel

that parts of the rock were permanently damp, which, according to tradition, was a sign of impurity. Thereupon they made further investigations and found beneath the rock a pit full of bones of the dead. From this they understood why the rock had been regarded as a place of impurity.

### 108. THE VILLAGE KEBAB

On the high road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, near the town of Ramlah, is situated on a hill the Arab village Kebab.

King Solomon was displeased with the people who dwelt in Kebab, because notwithstanding the great numbers of their flocks and herds, they refused for several years to pay the tax which the king had imposed on each owner of thirty oxen and forty sheep or goats. These sons of evil made a secret compact to elude the law by dividing their herds amongst themselves and passing off the women, servants and children, as owners; so that no one appeared to possess more than twenty-nine oxen and thirty-nine sheep or goats. Solomon detected this trick and was very angry; but before punishing these rude peasants, he determined to send a prophet to endeavor to move them to repentance. A holy man accordingly visited the village, but his words were scorned and he was mocked, beaten and driven away with stones.

The wise king then determined to punish them. By his orders a number of wolves surrounded the village and, casting forth devouring flames from their jaws,

burned it together with the surrounding fields, full of rich crops ripe for the harvest.

The ashes of the inhabitants and their flocks formed the hill on which Kebab now stands, an eternal monument of the vengeance of God wrought by the hand of Solomon, to whom may He be merciful.

### 109. THE ROOFLESS CAVE

Near the ruined city of the biblical Gezer, in the flank of a rocky mountain, there is a big cave, part of the roof of which has collapsed. Here and there fragments can still be seen. In very early times, before the flood, Noah and his family lived in Gezer. Noah would go thence, wander through the earth and call the dwellers thereon to go upright in the ways of the Lord, lest there should come a great flood and sweep the earth clear of all who dwelt upon her. But the wicked men would not hearken to him, but grew very wroth because he disturbed the peace and quiet of their ways.

Once when they grew very angry indeed, they gathered together and went up against Gezer and set siege to the city. And they wished to storm the city and be avenged on Noah, who walked upon the walls laughing at them. One day when the chiefs of the besiegers came together, they entered the cave to take counsel; and a miracle occurred, for the roof of the cave fell upon them and slew them.

## 110. THE OVEN OF MOTHER EVE

Among the ruins of the hill where the city of Gezer stood, a long tunnel of one hundred and thirty feet is hewn out. This tunnel is like an oven; and they say that this was the oven of Eve and here she baked her loaves. This oven had been handed down through the ages from one patriarch's wife to another until the time of Noah.

When in the days of Noah the righteous, the foundations of the deep burst forth and the earth was flooded, a stream of water flowed from Eve's oven as well, flooding all the land of Judah.

## 111. THE ROCK OF DESTRUCTION

Near the colony Hartub (the good mountain) which lies hidden in the mountains of Judah, there stands on a hill, an upright rock nearly seven feet high, overlooking the surrounding district (Fig. 37). Of this rock the following legend is told:

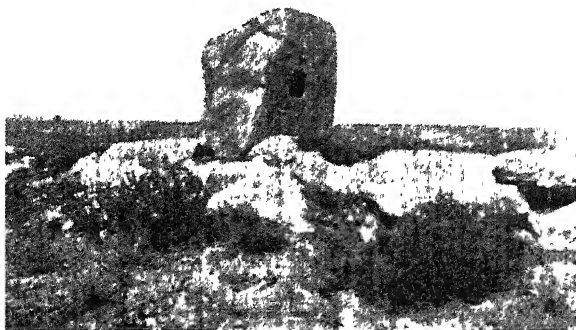


Fig. 37: The Rock of Destruction

When the enemy went up to besiege Jerusalem, an order was sent by the leaders of the people to the men of Judah: "Let every Jew and Jewess bring a large stone wherewith to fortify the city and the Temple, so as to make them impregnable."

In those days there lived in the village of Zorah, a mighty man descended from Samson, and his spirit was wroth within him when he heard of the straits of his people and the city. He therefore tore from the mountain side a massive rock and, placing it upon his shoulder, turned his steps towards the Holy City. He was still on the mountain pathway, when he beheld thick heavy pillars of smoke rising above the hills. Then he knew that the city had been taken and that the Temple of the Lord had been burnt down. The spirit which had upheld him in his mighty strength forsook him and, bowing under the weight of his burden, he found his grave beneath it.

Since then and till the present day, the upright pillar is called "The Rock of Destruction," in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple.

#### XIV. THE SOUTH OF JUDEA

“FOR WEALTH TO THE NORTH YOU  
MUST GO,  
BUT WISDOM IN THE SOUTH YOU FIND;  
CHOOSE SOUTH, FOR WISDOM YOU  
KNOW  
WILL BRING WEALTH AND SO PEACE  
OF MIND!”



## 112. THE VINEYARD OF JABNEH

During the time when Jerusalem was being besieged by the Romans, there lived there Rabbi Johanan the son of Zaccai, who was the most important scholar of his time and the father of the coming generations. When he saw that all hope was lost, Johanan made up his mind to leave Jerusalem together with his disciples. But it was impossible to do this because it had been decreed by the Jews that every one who left the city should be put to the sword. Only the dead were allowed to leave in accordance with the law that no dead could remain overnight in the Holy City.

Rabbi Johanan then pretended he was sick and his disciples proclaimed that he had died. His pupils then carried the body through the gates of the city. They brought the body into the Roman camp and when they came near to Vespasian, they opened the coffin and Rabbi Johanan arose and said: "Peace be with you, King! Peace be with you, King!"—When Vespasian heard that, he said "You must be hanged because you call me king and I am not." R. Johanan said: "But you are a king; if you were not a mighty king, God would not deliver Jerusalem to you. For the prophet Isaiah said: 'Lebanon (that is the sanctuary) shall fall by a mighty one'."

Meantime there came a messenger from Rome and



said to Vespasian, "The king has died and the nobles have proclaimed you as the new king of the Romans." When Vespasian heard that, he said to R. Johanan: "I see that you are a prophet and your words have been fulfilled. What is your wish?" And Johanan asked that he should be given the town of Jabneh and her wise scholars. And so Vespasian granted him this town.

The town of Jabneh took the place of the destroyed Jerusalem and became a religious and national center for the Jewish people. The school of Jabneh produced many great scholars and sages. This school was known by the name of *Kerem de-Yabneh*, the Vineyard of Jabneh, because the scholars were sitting there in rows like vines in a vineyard. Now instead of Jabneh there is a village called Yibneh, which is to the south of Jaffa near the road which leads to Gaza.

### 113. THE PIOUS MEN OF ASCALON

The Prophet Zephaniah said: For Gaza shall be forsaken and Ashkelon a desolation!

The Prophet Zechariah said: And the King shall perish from Gaza and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited!

Ascalon or Ashkelon is situated on the Mediterranean coast between Gaza and Jaffa. In the olden days it was one of the capitals of the Philistines. In the time of the second Temple many heathens lived here together with a great community of Jews. Also in

medieval times Ascalon was well known till 1270 when it was destroyed and desolated. The place, which is called by the Arabs Ashkalon, is covered in our days with heaps of ruins, remains of walls and fragments of granite pillars (see Fig. 38).

A. In the City of Ascalon there lived in the time of the second Temple Dama the son of Netina. Once the wise men of Jerusalem came to him to purchase a certain precious stone, supposed to have been a part of a priestly vessel which had been lost. They agreed to pay him a thousand gold pieces for it. Dama went into a private room to fetch the stone, but he found that his father was sleeping, with his foot resting on the box which contained the stone. Not wishing to disturb his father, he went back to the sages empty handed. The sages offered him 10,000 gold pieces, thinking that he was not satisfied with their first offer. When his father awoke, he took the stone and brought it to the sages, who were prepared to pay 10,000 gold pieces. But Dama refused the extra amount, saying that he did not wish to be rewarded for the respect which he had shown to his father.

What eventually was his reward? In that year his cow gave birth to a red calf and this he sold for 10,000 pieces of gold.

B. Two rich brothers lived in Ascalon. They had evil neighbors who used to say: When these Jews go to Jerusalem to pray, we will enter their houses and take away their possessions. There came a time when the

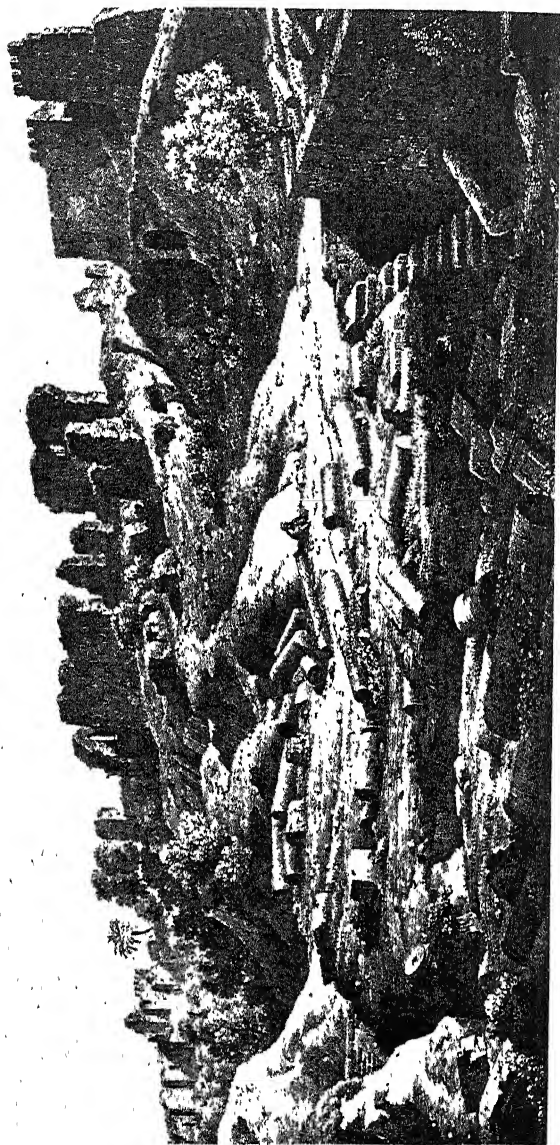


Fig. 38: The Ruins of Ascalon (1838)

brothers journeyed from Ascalon to Jerusalem and the Lord sent two angels in their image, who in their absence went to and from the houses. When the brothers returned, they sent gifts to their neighbors of what they had brought with them from Jerusalem. The neighbor said: "Where have you been?" "To Jerusalem," they answered. "When did you go?" "The other day." "When did you return?" "Yesterday." "Whom did you leave in your houses?" "No one." The neighbors understood then that it was the hand of the Lord and exclaimed: "Blessed is the God of the Jews, who did not desert them and will not desert them forever."

#### 114. THE WITCHES OF ASCALON

When Rabbi Simon the son of Shetah was appointed a prince in Israel, people came to him and said: "In the city of Ascalon, there is a certain cave inhabited by eighty witches."

One rainy day, Rabbi Simon gathered together eighty stalwart young men and gave each one a new vessel, a clean robe being folded in each. The young men accompanied Rabbi Simon to Ascalon, bearing the vessels on their heads, so that their clothes should not be spoilt by the rain. R. Simon said to them: "I will enter the cave by myself. If I whistle once, put on your robes; and if I whistle a second time, all of you together rush into the cave and each of you seize a witch and lift her up from the ground, for such is the nature of

witches that if you raise them from the ground they can do nothing."

When Rabbi Simon arrived at the entrance to the cave, he shouted: "Witches, witches, open for me, I am one of you!" They said to him: "How is it your clothes are so dry in this time of rain?" "I walked between the drops of rain!" he answered. And they asked again: "What have you come for?" And he replied: "To learn and to teach. Let each one of you show me what you can do, and I will show you what I can do." One witch uttered an incantation and bread appeared. Another brought meat in a similar way; a third, dishes; and a fourth, wine. Then the witches said to him: "And now what can you do?" To which he replied: "I can whistle twice and cause to appear eighty young men, clad in dry robes, who will make merry with you and you with them." He whistled once and the boys donned their robes; he whistled a second time and they all rushed into the cave. Simon said to them: "Let each one choose his partner!" And according to their instructions each of the young men lifted up a witch and so they carried them away to be hanged.

Thus was Ascalon rid of its eighty witches.

## 115. THE TREASURES OF ASCALON

Amidst the ruins of Palestine are hidden the treasures of the former wealthy inhabitants. People from all parts of the world come to excavate the land in order

to find these treasures. The excavators, however, are afraid to take them as they are, and so when they come to these ruins they utter a special prayer and charm. As a result of this the treasure which is buried in the ruins is turned to pieces of clay and pottery. These they take with them to their country; and once there, they utter another prayer, which immediately turns the pieces of clay into precious gold and silver.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, there lived in Mount Lebanon Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope. Her bounties had attached to her the bedouin Arabs; and it is said that they had every wish to proclaim her queen and do homage to her as such. A ceremony which bore a strong resemblance to the coronation of the sovereign Queen of the Desert was prepared for her at Tadmor, the ancient Palmyra, when she went to visit its ruins . . .

When Lady Stanhope lived on Mount Lebanon, a manuscript was put into her hands . . . It was written in Italian and disclosed the repositories of immense hoards of money buried in the city of Ascalon in certain spots therein mentioned.

After having formed an agreement with the central Turkish government, to whom a part of this money was promised, Lady Stanhope decided to go to the ruins of Ascalon.

Lady Stanhope, with the governor of Jaffa and other notables of the country, arrived at Ascalon and started to excavate, having in her service more than 150

peasants. The medical attendant of Lady Stanhope, Dr. Lewis Meryon who accompanied her in her travels, writes: "The men worked with great animation. The idea of discovering immense heaps of gold seemed to have an effect upon them, although they could not hope for a share in it . . . On the fifth day the outline of the foundation of the entire building was made out . . . On the outside of the west foundation three subterraneous places were opened, which at first, it was thought, would lead to the object we were in search of. But they proved to be cisterns and reservoirs for rain water . . .

"Signor Antonio Damiani (an English agent at Jaffa) affected an air of mystery in everything, and soberly advised her ladyship, if she wished to succeed, to sacrifice a cock of a particular colour, and at a particular hour of the day, to ensure success . . .

"Digging in the line of the west wall . . . about four feet under the surface, they found four gray granite columns, closely packed to each other, as if done methodically. This discovery revived the people's hopes; for it was supposed that huge masses of granite could not have fallen in such a position accidentally, and would not be laboriously placed so, unless to conceal something . . . They found also a statue of marble . . . Reports were circulated that the chest of the statue was found full of gold, half of which was given to the Pasha and the other half kept by Lady Hester . . .

"But, when every research was fruitless, after a

fortnight from the commencement, Lady Hester came to the conclusion that Jazzar Pasha, the governor of the city of Acre, by digging for marble and other materials in the ruins of Ascalon, had been fortunate enough to discover the treasure . . .”

Here is given Lady Hester's own account of these excavations, which she sent to Lord Bathurst, then Secretary of State.

My Lord,

A curious document, once in the hands of the Church, fell by accident into mine. It was an indication to considerable treasures in Syria . . . I proceeded . . . to Ascalon . . . and after digging for several days within them, we came to the under-ground fabric we were looking for: but, alas! it had been rifled. It was, as nearly as one could calculate, capable of containing three millions of pieces of gold—the sum mentioned in the document . . . We found a superb colossal statue without a head . . . Knowing how much it would be prized by English travellers, I ordered it to be broken into a thousand pieces that malicious people might not say I came to look for statues for my countrymen and not for treasures for the Turkish Port.

This business has taken up a good deal of my time for these three months past . . . The authenticity of the paper I do not doubt, but, as many centuries have elapsed since the Christians hid treasure there, it is not very surprising that it should have been removed . . .

I have the honour, etc.

H. L. Stanhope.



## 116. THE VALLEY OF THE ANTS

King Solomon, the son of David, said: "O men, we have been taught the speech of birds and have had all things bestowed on us, this is manifest excellence." And his armies were gathered together before Solomon and consisted of genii, men and birds, divided into distinct bands. Solomon led his armies, who marched until they came into the valley of the ants. An ant, seeing the hosts approaching, said: "O ants, enter ye into your habitations, lest Solomon and his armies tread you under foot and perceive it not." And Solomon smiled, amused at the words of the ant.

According to Moslem tradition this Valley of the Ants is situated between the village Bait Jibrin and the ruined town of Ascalon on the sea.

## 117. THE WILDERNESS OF GAZA

Every year a great flight of quails visits the sea coast of the wilderness of Gaza. At that period the Arabs stretch high nets along the coast from Gaza to El-Arish, and even further south in order to catch these birds worn out by their long journey across the seas. It is reckoned that during the season about two million quails are caught.

The birds of the wilderness of Gaza were well known because of their fatness. Once two scholars were discussing the fat birds of Babel, and one of them said,

"Come with me to the wilderness of Gaza and I will show you still fatter ones."



Fig. 38a: The Town of Gaza

When the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness of Sinai, the Bible tells us: "And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people rose up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails; he that gathered least gathered ten heaps; and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp."

In Hebrew the quail is called *selav*. "Why is it named so?" asked the Sages of Israel. "Because the righteous ate them in peace (in Hebrew *shalvah* = peace).

The Psalmist in praising God sings as follows:

"He rained flesh also upon them as the dust,  
And winged birds as the sand of the seas,  
And He let it fall in the midst of their camp  
Round about their habitations."

### 118. THE MAN FROM THE SOUTH

The Sages of Israel relate: The people of the south of Judea are tender of heart and obedient to the words of the Holy Law.

Simon the high priest related the following: Once a Nazirite came to me from the south of Judea. I saw that his eyes were beautiful and his appearance handsome, but his hair hung in long curls. I said to him: "Why do you neglect yourself and do not tend your beautiful body?" He answered: "I was a shepherd to my father in my city. Once I went to fetch water from a fountain and saw my image on the surface of the water. Mad impulses stirred within me and I was nearly overcome . . . It was then that I decided to become a Nazirite and to devote myself to God."

### 119. THE WISDOM OF THE NEGEB

A. The southern part of Palestine is known by the Hebrew name of Negeb, the dry land. In olden times the inhabitants of the South were noted for their

wisdom, as those of North Galilee for their wealth. Therefore the Sages used to say:

For wealth to the North you must go,  
But wisdom in the South you find;  
Choose South, for wisdom you know  
Will bring wealth, and so peace of mind.

In the Temple, the table with the showbread was placed towards the north and the candle-stick towards the south, because the table with the showbread is a symbol of wealth and the candle-stick with light a symbol of wisdom.

B. Alexander the king of Macedonia asked the wise men of the Negeb these questions. "Is it farther from the earth to the sky than from the east to the west?" The wise men answered: "O King, is it not known to thee that when the sun stands in the east or in the west he is so far away that man can look upon his brightness, but when he stands overhead he is so near that his brightness dazzles the eyes of man? Therefore it must be farther from east to west than it is from the earth to the sky."

Alexander asked them again: "Who is a wise man?" "He who can foresee that which is to come." "Who is a hero?"—"He who conquers his desires." "Who is a rich man?"—"He who is contented with his lot."

The king said further: "What must a man do to be beloved of the people?" The wise men answered: "He must hate the government and its ruler."

Alexander asked the wise men again: "Is it better

to be on sea or on land?" "On land," they replied. "For they who sail on the sea find no ease of heart and mind till they reach the land."

"Who is the wisest of you all?" He said to them. "We are all equal in wisdom, for we have answered your questions as one man."

Alexander then clad them in purple robes, and gave them necklaces of gold.

## XV. THE PLAIN OF SHARON

"THE GLORY OF LEBANON SHALL BE  
GIVEN UNTO IT,  
THE EXCELLENCY OF CARMEL AND  
SHARON,  
AND SHARON SHALL BE A FOLD OF  
FLOCKS  
AND THE VALLEY OF ACHOR A PLACE  
FOR THE HERDS."



## 120. THE FORESTS OF SHARON

Till about a century ago, the whole width of Sharon from Jaffa to Tul-Karem was covered with great thick forests of oaks. In the neighborhood of Kefar Saba, Raananiah and Herzelia there are still meager bushes and shrubs, poor relics of the former forests.

Sheikh Abd al-Latif, who dwells in Jaffa, told this tale:

When my grandfather was young, he used to travel on business from Jaffa to Tul-Karem and back by way of the forest. When he came to the denser parts, he could not ride upright upon his ass, but had to bend low because of the thickly growing branches and foliage. When he was old, blind and weak, he would still come to stay with his sons at Tul-Karem.

Once, when he was about a hundred years old and totally blind, he ordered his sons to take him to Jaffa to visit his many relatives and friends. He was put on an ass and I, then a youngster, was told to ride with him. When we came to the broads of Sharon, my grandsire lay flat along his ass. I asked, "Grandsire, why do you not ride upright?" He answered, "My dear grandson, I still remember this district from my boyhood when it was a wild thicket. I always had to ride thus, and even now I fear the multitude of branches." I answered, "O grandsire, you err indeed. Times are changed. There is no more forest in Sharon; ride



upright and never fear. For lack of care and with so many wars, the woods have disappeared during the years."

## 121. THE PRAYER OF SHARON

There were many Jewish villages in Sharon in days gone by. Many of the inhabitants were shepherds, breeding flocks and herds of cattle. The slopes of the hills and the banks of the brooks made pleasant pasture. The calves of Sharon were among the best in the Land of Israel.

The houses of the Sharon villagers were built, like those of the present day Fellahin, from bricks made of mud and clay (see Fig. 39). In years of plentiful rain these houses would crumble and fall, and many of the Sharonites would find their death in the collapse of their houses. The Arabs still tell of such villages, destroyed by furious storms and rain.

In the olden days the men of Sharon besought the high priest to mention their straits when he entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement and prayed for the people. The high priest would say, "May it be Thy will, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, that Thou send not upon us exile...need...that this year may be a year of low prices, a year of plenty, a year of trade, a year of rain, heat and dew . . ." And for the men of Sharon he said, "May it be Thy will, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, that their houses shall not fall on them and become their graves!"

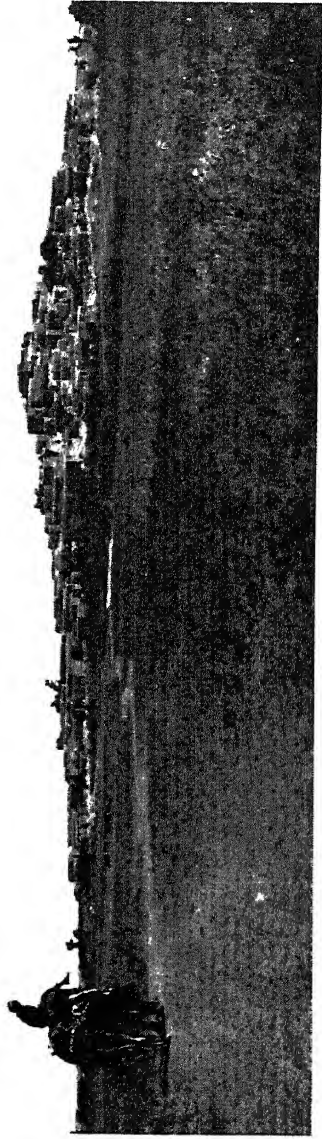


Fig. 39: The Village Kakun on the Sharon

## 122. THE SYCAMORE OF KEFAR SABA

Near the village of Kefar Saba in Southern Sharon, there was in ancient times a Jewish town of the same name. A sycamore tree (*Shikmah*) was there, and all who touched it became unclean. Though men sought for a reason and examined it and the ground around, they could find no cause for the impurity of this tree.

But one day this tree was uprooted in a high wind; and they found a dead man's skull amid its roots. Then they understood why that sycamore made people unclean.

## 123. THE MEETING AT ANTIPATRIS

When Alexander, the King of Macedonia, approached Palestine, Simon the Just, who was the high priest, arrayed himself in his priestly robes and, accompanied by the nobles of Israel who carried torches in their hands, went out to meet the royal guest. Both parties traveled all night, Alexander from the north (Syria) and Simon from the west (Jerusalem), and came in sight of each other at dawn of day. Alexander asked his attendants: "Who are these?" He was told in reply that they were the Jews . . .

As the sun rose, both parties met in Antipatris. On seeing Simon the Just, Alexander alighted from his chariot and bowed before him. His courtiers expressed their astonishment that a great monarch like Alexander

should bow to a Jew. He replied: "I saw this man before me when conquering in my wars!"

In the neighborhood of the colony Petah-Tikvah, on the top of a small hill, there is an old ruined fortress (see Fig. 40). This is the site of an earlier fortress built by Herod, the King, and named after his father, Antipatris. Close to this fortress was an important cross-road, one road going from north to south (the famous *Via Maris* of the Romans) and the other from Jerusalem to Caesarea, the capital of the Romans in Palestine.



Fig. 40: The Fortress of Antipatris

## 124. CAESAREA AND ITS MARTYRS

A. The city of Caesarea situated on the shores of the Mediterranean was the capital and military base of the Romans when they ruled Palestine. So fertile were its surroundings that it was called by the Sages of Israel

"The Land of Life." In the town itself there was a large Jewish population with many great scholars and sages. Very famous was Rabbi Abbahu, who directed a college and officiated as a judge. It is said that on the death of this Rabbi, the very columns of Caesarea trickled water as if mourning for him.

B. Many of the Jewish rebels who fought against the Romans were imprisoned in Caesarea. Of these the most famous are "the ten martyrs of Israel" (*Aseret Haruge Malkut*).

The Jewish traveler Jacob, the son of Nathanel ha-Cohen, who came to Palestine in the twelfth century, writes the following. "In Caesarea there is the cave of the ten Jewish martyrs, and near the entrance is to be found the tomb of a heathen. Once this man appeared in a dream to the elders of the city and cried: 'Take me away from my burying place, for I am being scourged with lashes of iron which are red hot . . . In the cave near me, there are men wearing white robes and they are like angels . . .'

"In Caesarea there is a great stone of marble, which is said to have been the throne of Caesar, and on the spot where the martyrs were slain no blade of grass has ever grown."

C. Caesarea was the great rival city to Jerusalem. The one town was the cultural center of the Romans, and the other the cultural center of the Jews. The Sages of Israel said:

"Caesarea and Jerusalem—if any one should tell

thee that both are destroyed, do not believe him; if he says both are peopled, believe him not. If he say: Caesarea is destroyed and Jerusalem is peopled, or Jerusalem is destroyed and Caesarea is peopled, believe him . . . When the one is replenished the other must be waste, both cannot flourish or be desolate at the same time."

In our days Jerusalem flourishes and Caesarea is a village of ruins.

## 125. THE AQUEDUCT OF CAESAREA

If ever you wander round Caesarea, you are sure to see a great aqueduct stretching from the foot of the hills of Samaria to the town. Should you follow this aqueduct from the hills to the town, you will find it starting gaily off with three conduits. Go further and first one then a second conduit disappears, and only one forlorn watercourse reaches the town.

Being presumably of an inquiring turn of mind, you may ask the reason. It is as follows:

In the days of old the daughter of the king of Caesarea had no peer for beauty in the whole land. And she had three suitors, a Moslem, a Jew and a Christian. She was much perplexed, for she was equally fond of them all; so she went to her father for counsel. He was a wise man and answered, "My child, we must act in the best interests of the city. Whichever of the three you choose, the other two sections of the dwellers in the

land will be displeased. So you cannot choose arbitrarily but must eliminate two of your suitors without giving offence. You can do it this way: The water-pits of the city are salt and brackish, but in the foothills are fountains of fresh living water. Whichever of the three first brings this fresh water to Caesarea, wins your hand."

So the three youths went out to the hills and began to build three conduits. But soon one grew tired and forsook the labor, leaving the others to continue. So they went on with two conduits. But when the second one saw that the first was working much more rapidly, he too gave up the work in despair. So only one was left and he was the first to bring living water to Caesarea. He was lucky and married the princess and they lived happily ever after.

But do not ask whether it was the Jew, the Moslem or the Christian who won the bride. For I swear there is no one who can tell you.

## 126. THE RIVER OF THE CROCODILES

In the valley of Sharon near Caesarea, there flows a river from the mountains of Samaria, which is called by the Arabs *Nahr al-Zark*, the blue river. It is also called the river of the crocodiles, because many crocodiles once lived here. Near this river was once a town called Crocodilopolis, the city of the Crocodiles.

The pilgrim Fretellus writes in the year 1148 C.E.:

"In the river of Caesarea are crocodiles, horrible serpents. The mouth of the crocodile is distinguished from all mouths in this respect that its upper jaw is movable, while its lower is fixed . . . The crocodile hates man above all animals . . .

"How crocodiles came to be at Caesarea I shall state shortly. In ancient days two brothers reigned at Caesarea with equal authority; the elder of them, because he was not reigning alone, plotted for the death of his brother, who was afflicted with leprosy, thinking to himself that if he could get two pairs of crocodiles from the Nile to the aforementioned river, his brother, who frequented the river baths in the summer time, would perhaps be killed and he would obtain the kingdom. This actually happened and so the elder reigned alone."





## XVI. THE MOUNTAINS OF SAMARIA

“AND THOU SHALT BE BUILT, O VIRGIN  
OF ISRAEL,  
THOU SHALT YET PLANT VINES UPON  
THE MOUNTAINS OF SAMARIA,  
THAT THE WATCHMEN UPON MOUNT  
EPHRAIM SHALL CRY:  
‘ARISE YE, AND LET US GO UP TO  
ZION’.”



## 127. THE BLESSING OF SAMARIA

The fruitful land of Samaria was in the hands of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the children of Joseph, and this is the blessing which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death . . . And to Joseph he said:

“Blessed of the Lord be his land.” The Sages of Israel explained: The land of Joseph was the most blessed in the world.

“For the precious things of heaven, for the dew.” At all times and seasons did the dew live upon the ground.

“And for the deep that coucheth beneath.” Fresh springs and fountains were always to be found in the depths below.

“And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun.” The land was ever bathed in bright sunshine.

“And for the precious things brought forth by the moon.” Brightly did the moon shine upon it.

“And for the chief thing of the ancient mountains and for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof . . .” The land of Joseph was full of blessings. The man who had his lot in this land could desire nothing better.

## 128. THE MOUNTAIN OF THE KING

The southern part of Samaria was called Tur Malka, the Mountain of the King, after Alexander Jannaeus, king of Judea, who had many possessions there.

The Sages of Israel related:

A. King Jannaeus of Judah had sixty myriads of cities in the Mountain of the King and each had a population equal to the number of Israel that went out of Egypt, excepting three cities, in which this number was doubled. And these were: Kefar Bish, the city of evil, so called because there was no hospice for the reception of strangers therein; Kefar Shihlaim, the city of cresses, because this vegetable was the abundant produce of the place; and Kefar Dikraia, the city of males, because the wives of this city first gave birth to boys and then to a girl, after which they bore no more children.

B. "Because of a cock and a hen the Mountain of the King was destroyed."

There was a custom in that place of carrying a cock and a hen before a bridal procession as a symbol of the commandment of the Lord: "Be fruitful and multiply." One day some Roman soldiers took away the cock and the hen, whereupon they were attacked by the Jews for their act of violence. The soldiers charged the Jews with rebellion against the Roman Emperor, who came at once with a large army to subdue them. There was one among the Jews named Bar Deroma (the son of

the South), who was very nimble and strong withal; he sprang upwards of a mile at a bound and slew several thousands of the Romans. The Emperor then took off his crown, placed it upon the ground and said: "Lord of the Universe! May it please Thee not to deliver me into the hands of this man, nor my empire into the hands of one individual!"

Bar Deroma was then killed by a serpent . . . When the Emperor heard of his death and the extraordinary manner in which it occurred, he said: "Since such a great miracle has been wrought on my behalf I will spare the city this time." And he at once began to withdraw his army. The Jews began to dance and make merry in the evening and the city was so brightly illuminated that one might read the engraving of a seal at the distance of a mile. The Emperor, thinking that the Jews were doing this to mock him, suddenly returned and assaulted the city.

Three hundred thousand swordsmen went up to the Mountain of the King and there slaughtered the people for three days and three nights, and yet while on the one side of the mount they were mourning, on the other they were merry; those on the one side did not know the affairs of those on the other.

## 129. THE PRAISE OF SHECHEM

Amid the mountains of Samaria is situated the city of Shechem, one of the oldest cities in Palestine. The old town was probably built on the slope of the moun-

tain and therefore it was called Shechem, which means in Hebrew shoulder (of the mountain). The Romans built a new city nearby and called it Neapolis, the new city, and from this is derived the present name Nablus (see Fig. 41).

In Shechem the Patriarch Jacob pitched his tent and raised an altar, which he called *El-Elohe Israel*, God, the God of Israel. It is related that when the tribes of Israel wandered in the desert, each tribe had a flag. The tribe of Simeon had a green flag and on it was painted the city of Shechem.

A. Till the present day there are in Shechem and its surroundings many monuments of the patriarchs. In the town there is a mosque called *Jam'at al-Khadra*, the green mosque.<sup>1</sup> Here can be seen the place where Jacob was sitting when his sons came and told him about the fate of his beloved Joseph. They brought the coat of many colors, stained with blood, and Jacob said: "It is my son's coat! An evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph has assuredly been rent in pieces! And Jacob rent his clothes and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days." Therefore this mosque is also called by the Arabs: *Hizn Ja'akub*, the Mourning of Jacob.

B. Close to Shechem there is the well of Jacob. An anonymous pilgrim in the year 1180 C.E. writes:

<sup>1</sup>According to one tradition this mosque was called after Khadir, one of the officers of Sultan Beiburs (1260-), to whom was entrusted the building of this mosque.



Fig. 41: The Town of Shechem



"Jacob's well changes its color four times a year, being muddy, blood-red, green and clear." On the way from Shechem to Jaffa there is a small village called Irtaḥ (in Arabic rest), because once Jacob rested there. Up to this day there is a small building with a dome called *Banāt ʿaʿakub*, daughters of Jacob. Not far from the well of Jacob is the tomb of Joseph. In Shechem there is another mosque, *ʿamʿat al-Anbiyā*, the mosque of the prophets, where are shown the tombs of the children of Jacob.

### 130. THE MOUNTAIN GERIZIM

The town of Shechem is situated between two mountains (see Fig. 41): Ebal, the mountain of curse (*Har ha-Kelalah*), and Gerizim, the mountain of blessing (*Har ha-Berakah*). Mount Gerizim is holy to the Samaritans, who once had their temple there. The Sages of Israel say that there was an image of a dove in this temple and the Samaritans worshiped it.

Mount Gerizim is also called by the Samaritans *Har ha-Kedem*, the ancient mountain. The Samaritan Marqah, who lived about 100 B.C.E., writes: "Why was it called *Har ha-Kedem*? Because this mountain and the Garden of Eden appeared before the appearance of the dry earth. From here was taken the dust for the creation of Adam. Adam is the glory of the creation and the blessed mount is the |splendor of the Earth . . ."

On Mount Gerizim the Samaritans still show the place of the altar built by Adam and his son Seth, the altar built by Noah after the flood and the rock on which Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, his son. Here are shown also the stones which were brought up from the Jordan by Joshua the son of Nun. As it is written in the Holy Law; "And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people . . . it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones . . . it shall be when ye be over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in Mount Ebal (in the Samaritan version: Mount Gerizim) . . . and thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of the law very plainly."

### 131. THE TOMB OF JOSEPH

A. "And Joseph made the children of Israel swear to him, saying, 'God will surely visit you; and ye shall take up my bones hence.' And Joseph died when he was a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him and set him in a coffin in Egypt."

"How did Moses know where Joseph was buried?" asked the Sages of Israel. "Serah, the daughter of Asher, remained from that generation of Joseph. Moses went to her and asked, 'Know you not where Joseph lies buried?' She answered, 'The Egyptians made a metal casket for him and placed it in the Nile so that its waters should be blessed.' Moses went to the bank of

the Nile and cried, 'Joseph, Joseph, the time is come concerning which the Holy One, blessed be His name, spoke, saying that He would redeem us, yea, the time concerning which you caused Israel to take oath is come. If you show yourself, it is well; if not, we are clear of our oath.' And the metal casket with Joseph immediately floated to the surface of the Nile."

B. Moses said to the Lord, "Lord of the Universe, Joseph's bones may enter the land, yet I may not!" The Lord answered, "He who acknowledged the land of Israel as his land may be buried therein." For Joseph said, "I have indeed been stolen from the land of the Hebrews." "But he who did not acknowledge the land of Israel as his land is not permitted to be buried there." For when the daughters of Jethro said of Moses, "He is an Egyptian," he was silent and did not reveal his true origin.

C. "And the bones of Joseph which the children of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried at Shechem in the portion of the fields which Jacob bought." The Sages of Israel say, "There are three places which the nations cannot deny to Israel, saying they were stolen by them; and they are these: the cave of Machpelah, the Temple and the grave of Joseph." For it is written as mentioned above, "They buried (Joseph) at Shechem in the portion of the fields which Jacob bought."

East of Shechem, by the highroad to Jerusalem, there is still a small building with a white dome. This marks the grave of Joseph (see Fig. 42). At one time the graves



Fig. 42: The Tomb of Joseph and Mount Ebal

of his sons Manasseh and Ephraim were pointed out beside it.

### 132. THE FOUNTAIN OF SOKER

To the east of the city of Shechem at the foot of Mount Ebal there is the village Askar. It has a spring called '*Ain Askar*. Here was the town of Sychar. Once Jesus was passing through Samaria on his way to Galilee as it is said: "So he cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph."

The Jews called this town En Soker, the fountain of the Lock. Round it stretches a beautiful and fruitful valley which in springtime is covered with green fields of wheat and barley.

One year, in the days of the Temple, the corn of the districts around Jerusalem failed and there was not sufficient wheat even for the showbread in the Temple. The priests did not know where to obtain the choice wheat necessary for the preparation of the showbread in accordance with the injunctions of the Holy Law as it is written: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete . . . Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth parts of an ephah; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first fruits unto the Lord."

There appeared in the courtyard of the Temple a man dumb of speech and stood before the priest of the Lord. He placed one hand upon his eye (Hebrew: *'Ain*) and his other hand upon the lock of a door (Hebrew: *Soker*), but the priests did not know what the afflicted of God meant thereby. So they brought him to Pethahiah, the overseer over the Temple, who looked at the dumb man and, turning to the priests, he said: "Do you not see whither his movements lead? They lead to *'Ain* (eye or fountain) and to *Soker* (lock). Tell me, therefore, is there such a place as En-Soker, the fountain of the lock?" And the priests answered Pethahiah: "Yes, there is." And Pethahiah said to them: "Go to the valley near En Soker and you will find wheat for the showbread for the Temple."

All the days that Simon the Just acted as high priest, the showbread was blessed, and when it was eaten amongst the priests, everyone received a portion about the size of an olive. And of this portion many of the priests ate and did not go hungry.

### 133. THE TOWN OF SAMARIA

Isaiah the Prophet said: "The head of Ephraim is Samaria."

The town of Samaria, which was once a great capital of the Kingdom of Israel, is now an Arab village called Sabustiyah. Omri, King of Israel, built Samaria as his capital. "And he bought the hills of Samaria of Shemer

for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria (*Shomeron*)."

"Why did Omri become king of Israel?" asked the Sages. "Because he added another city to Palestine, that is Samaria."

Samaria was also the capital of Ahab, the son of Omri. It is said of Ahab that for the seventy children he had in Samaria he had seventy children in the city of Jezreel, and each one had two palaces, one for the summer and one for the winter.

It is written: "And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." Said Rabbi Johanan: "Because he wrote on the gates of Samaria, 'Ahab denies the God of Israel.' There was not a furrow in the land of Israel on which Ahab did not erect an idol and worship it." Therefore Ahab, King of Israel, has no portion in the God of Israel!

#### 134. THE PLACE OF THE FIRE

"And Ahaziah (the king of Israel) fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them: Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the God of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease. But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite: 'Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say

unto them, Is it because there is no God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the God of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord: Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die . . .’ Then the king sent unto him (Elijah) a captain of fifty with his fifty: and he went up to him and behold, he sat on the top of a hill, and he spake unto him: ‘Thou man of God, the king hath said: Come down!’ And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty: ‘If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty.’ And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty . . .”

Near the ruined city of Samaria on the slope of the mountain which looks down on the village Sabustiyah, there is to this day a holy place which is dedicated to Sheikh Sha‘aleh, the Sheikh of the Fire. It is related that it was here that the fire descended and burned the messengers of the king of Israel. A Greek inscription from the fourth century which was discovered here, tells about a magnificent building which was erected on this spot in memory of Elijah the prophet.





## XVII. HAIFA AND CARMEL

“IN THE SEA OF HAIFA ARE HIDDEN  
THE TREASURES FOR THE RIGHTEOUS.”



## 135. THE SEA OF HAIFA

A. The Sea of Haifa was on the border of the territory of the Tribe of Zebulun (see Fig. 43). When the Tabernacle was completed, the tribes brought their offerings thereto. "On the third day came the chief of the sons of Zebulun; his offering, one silver bowl." The Sages of Israel say, "Zebulun engaged in commerce, therefore his gift was a silver bowl, which is like the sea (the Haifa Bay) in the portion of Zebulun."

B. There is a story told of a very pious man who was walking among the rocks on the Haifa seashore. He was thinking to himself, "Can the Holy One, blessed be He, construct out of a single pearl the eastern gate of the Temple together with its two small side gates?" Thereupon was heard a divine voice, saying, "Were the man not such a perfect saint, judgment would already have smitten him. The whole world was made in six days, and will it be difficult to make the eastern gate and two side gates of the Temple out of a single pearl?"

The man at once besought mercy, and said, "Lord of the Universe! Though I thought it, I never uttered it with my lips!" Thereupon a miracle occurred to him and the sea was split before him and he saw the ministering angels concealed therein. They were polishing and planning, and they said to him, "This is the

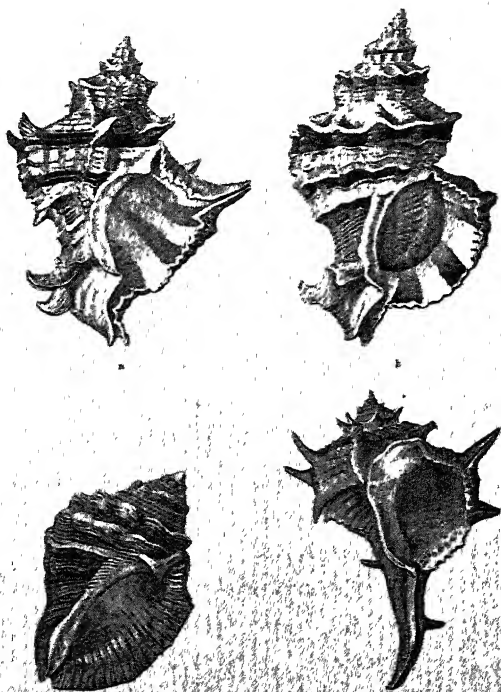


Fig. 43: Haifa and its Sea (1851)

eastern gate of the Temple which we are preparing with its two side gates; and all out of one pearl."

### 136. THE MOLLUSC AND THE PURPLE

On the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, there are to be found various kinds of molluscs (*Murex brandaris*, *M. Trunculus*), from whose bodies can be distilled the richest of purple and blue dyes (see Fig. 44). Fishermen



a. *Murex trunculus*, b. *Murex brandaris*, c. *Murex trunculus*, d. *Murex brandaris*.

Fig. 44: The Mollusc and the Purple

round the coast line of Haifa caught the molluscs, from which they prepared the purple. In medieval times, Haifa or a suburb close by was known by the name of Porphyreon, from the Greek word *Porphyra*, meaning purple.

God said to Moses: "Thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet . . . And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple and scarlet . . . And thou shalt make a hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet . . . And they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother and his sons . . . And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple."

After the division of the land of Canaan amongst the tribes of Israel, Zebulun inherited the territory round Haifa and he came before the throne of the Almighty and said, "Lord of the Universe, upon my brethren you have bestowed rich and fertile land, whilst I have inherited only the barren shores of the sea. My brethren hold fields and vineyards and I have only the molluscs and the sands . . ."

And the Lord answered Zebulun and said, "As I live forever, all the tribes of Israel shall look to thee for the mollusc to give them the sacred purple." And the people of the tribe of Zebulun occupied themselves with the work of collecting the molluscs and preparing the purple from them.

Rabbi Jose the sage relates, "Once as I was walking from Acco to Haifa, along the seashore, I met an old

friend who greeted me and whom I greeted in return. I said to him, 'My son, how dost thou maintain thyself?' He said to me, 'From these molluscs.' I asked him, 'Are there many of them?' He answered, 'There are many places in the sea where heaps upon heaps of them are to be found'."

It is said of the mollusc that it has the color of the sea, the character of a fish, and because it appears only once in seventy years it is precious to mankind.

### 137. HOW PURPLE WAS DISCOVERED

How did man discover that the mollusc yields a beautiful purple dye? Once upon a time a hunter went forth with his dog to shoot sea-fowl. As the bird fell, the dog brought it to his master. On one occasion the dog came back with a peculiar kind of liquid dripping from his mouth. His master wiped it off with a handkerchief. After some time, when he took his handkerchief out of his pocket, the hunter noticed that it was stained a bright scarlet. For a moment he thought that blood had been running from the dog's mouth, but on further examination, he found that that could not be the case.

The next day, on returning to the shore with the dog, he watched him and noticed that the dog caught a certain kind of mollusc which he ate. His jaws dripped with a juice that looked exactly like that which he had wiped off with his handkerchief the day before. Then



the hunter understood that it was the juice of the mollusc which had dyed his handkerchief that brilliant shade of purple.

### 138. THE MARTYR OF THE WAR

In the railway station at Haifa, lying amongst the train rails, there is to be found a green monument over the grave of a moslem martyr called *Al-Mujahid*, the Martyr of the Holy War. The Arab inhabitants of Haifa go there to pray, to make their offerings and to kindle little lamps of oil.

About twenty-five years ago, the Turkish Government despatched to Haifa an engineer to draw up plans for the railway which today runs from Haifa to Damascus. According to the plans of the engineer, the lines should have run over the shrine of the Holy Martyr. At the very beginning of the work, he gave instructions to his men to level down the tomb and to build the railway lines upon it. The Moslem inhabitants of Haifa cried out in protest against such desecration, but in vain.

When the railway line was completed, all the great men of the land gathered together to celebrate the opening of the railway. A special waggon was prepared for all the guests of honor, with the engineer at their head. This waggon was pushed along amidst the cheers of the onlookers. As it passed over the spot where the grave of the Holy Martyr had stood, the earth trembled

beneath it so that the waggon almost overturned. The passengers shook with fear and, turning to the engineer sitting shamefacedly in their midst, they asked him what it meant. The engineer could not say a word.

They examined the rail and found everything in perfect order. As the waggon returned over the same spot, however, the earth trembled with even greater violence and the directors of the railway were very angry with the engineer who had failed in his task.

The engineer returned home sad and humiliated and could find no peace within his soul. In the night he had a dream, and in the dream appeared the spirit of the Holy Martyr who said, "Be it known unto you, it was I who caused the waggon to shake and had it not been for the innocent people with you, I would have overturned the waggon and killed you. Therefore, remember, if you will not remove the train rail from above me and rebuild my tomb, your end will be a bitter one."

The next day the engineer ordered his men to change the course of the line, to rebuild the tomb and raise the monument that exists to this day, since when all trains pass peacefully by.

### 139. THE CHILDREN OF MOUNT CARMEL

The story is told of two children of Mount Carmel taken captive by their jailer, who followed them. In front of them a camel was carrying two full goatskins, one on each side. Said one of the children to the other,

"This camel which goes before us is a female and is blind in one eye; also in one goatskin there is wine and in the other oil." The jailer, greatly astonished, said to them: "Ye children of a stiff-necked people, how do ye know all this?" And the two children answered: "That the camel is a female we can tell by her legs. That she is blind in one eye, is clear from the way she eats grass. She eats only on one side of the road, that is the side on which she can see the grass, but on the other side where she cannot see, the grass remains untouched."

"And how do you know that one goatskin contains wine and the other oil?" asked the jailer. "Because," answered the children, "We watch the drops as they fall from the goatskins. The wine drops sink into the ground, while the oil drops remain on the surface."

Thereupon the jailer kissed the children, brought them to his house, and made a great feast for them. Raising his hands in prayer to God, he said: "Blessed be He who chose the children of Abraham and imparted to them some of His wisdom so that wherever they go, they become masters over their masters."

#### 140. THE MELONS THAT TURNED TO STONE

When Elijah the Prophet dwelt on Carmel, he often forsook the lonely cave in which he lived and wandered amid the hills to seek his God and pray to Him. Sunk in thought he would stray for days and nights along

the paths and byways, his hair shaggy and his appearance wild. For he was very wroth with the prophets of Baal, and in his heart burned the zeal of the God of Hosts. He never took food with him, for he trusted in God; and he always chanced upon plants of the field or fruit of the trees, which were his food and restored his spirit.

One evening Elijah came to a field of ripe sweet melons. He was weary with a full day's journey and his spirit was weak because of hunger and thirst. So he approached the owner of the field and asked him to give him a melon. But the man laughed at the queer shaggy wayfarer and said: "Those are not melons, but stones scattered in the field." Elijah became enraged and said, "God grant that your words become true!"

As soon as the prophet had spoken, the melons became rounded stones scattered over the field. So if upon one of the spurs of Carmel you find smooth round stones, you may know that they are the melons which the prophet cursed in his wrath and changed into stones, which remain unto this day.

#### 141. THE CAVE OF ELIJAH

On the slope of Mount Carmel which faces the blue Mediterranean Sea, not far from the town of Haifa, there is a cave hewn in the rock, called by the Jews *Me'arat Eliyahu ha-Nabi*, The cave of Elijah the prophet (see Fig. 45). The Arabs call it: *Al-Khadr*, the green

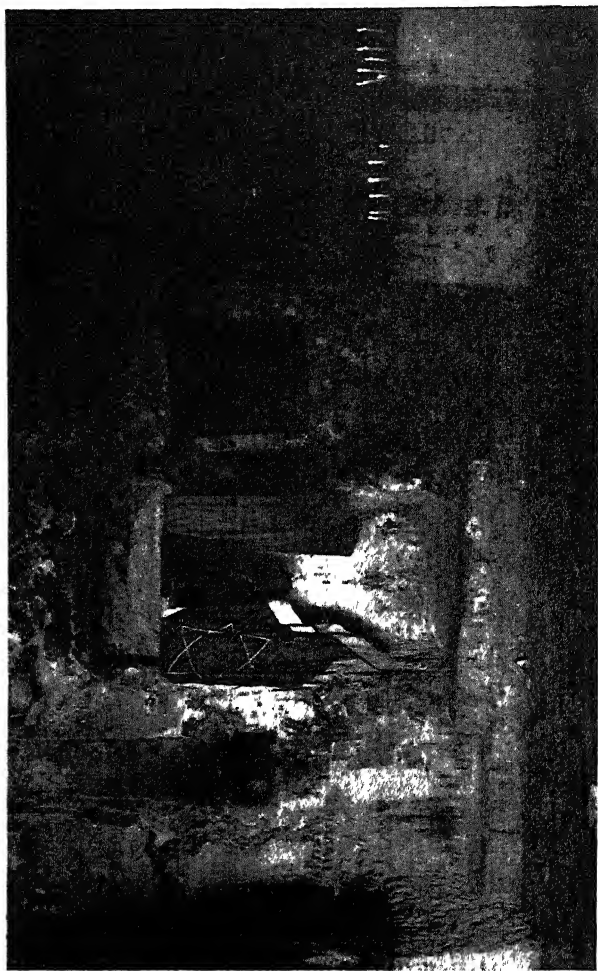


Fig. 45: The Cave of Elijah

one, which is the nickname of Elijah, who is always green in the memory of humanity.

Elijah the prophet spent many days of his life in Mount Carmel, sometimes called Jabal Mar Elias, the Mountain of Saint Elijah. He stayed also in this cave, which is holy to the Jews. On the Sunday following Sabbath *Nahamu* (when the chapter of Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people," is intoned in the synagogue), the Jews make a pilgrimage to this cave. Jewish women were wont to measure the cave with string and afterwards to use this string as wick in the Sabbath candle.

This cave has many virtues and was especially famous as an excellent cure for imbeciles. From all parts of the country sick people were brought there in the hope that they might be cured. Also women who desired to give birth to a male child came to this place and remained there for several days.



## XVIII. ACCO AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE SAID:

IF I CONQUERED ACCO, I COULD  
CHANGE THE FACE OF THE WORLD.  
THE FATE OF ALL THE EAST IS IN THIS  
SMALL TOWN!





## 142. THE PRAISE OF ACCO

On the coast of the Mediterranean Sea is situated the city of Acco, one of the old cities of Palestine. When the children of Israel conquered the land, Acco was a fortified city. After the death of Alexander, King of Macedonia, Acco was a stronghold to the kings of Ptolemais, who called the city by this name. The Crusaders changed the name to Acre, and the city, which was the chief port of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, was in the charge of the knights of St. John and thus received the name of St. John d'Acre.

A. The Arabs up to the present time have kept the old name Acco, the root of which is unknown. The Greeks said that the name Acco is derived from the Greek word *Aké* which signifies healing. They related that the well known hero Hercules went to seek for herbs on the banks of a river to heal his wounds. He came to the river Belus which flows near Acco and found there the vegetable *colocasia*, which effected the cure of his wounds. In memory of that event, the city which was built near this river was called Acco, the cure.<sup>1</sup>

B. In olden times the city of Acco was inhabited by Jews. It is related of Rabbi Abba that he used to kiss the rocks of Acco, and of Ràbbi Hiyya that he delighted

<sup>1</sup>This vegetable, the botanical name of which is *Colocasia antiquorum*, and in Arabic *kalkas*, is still known round Acco.

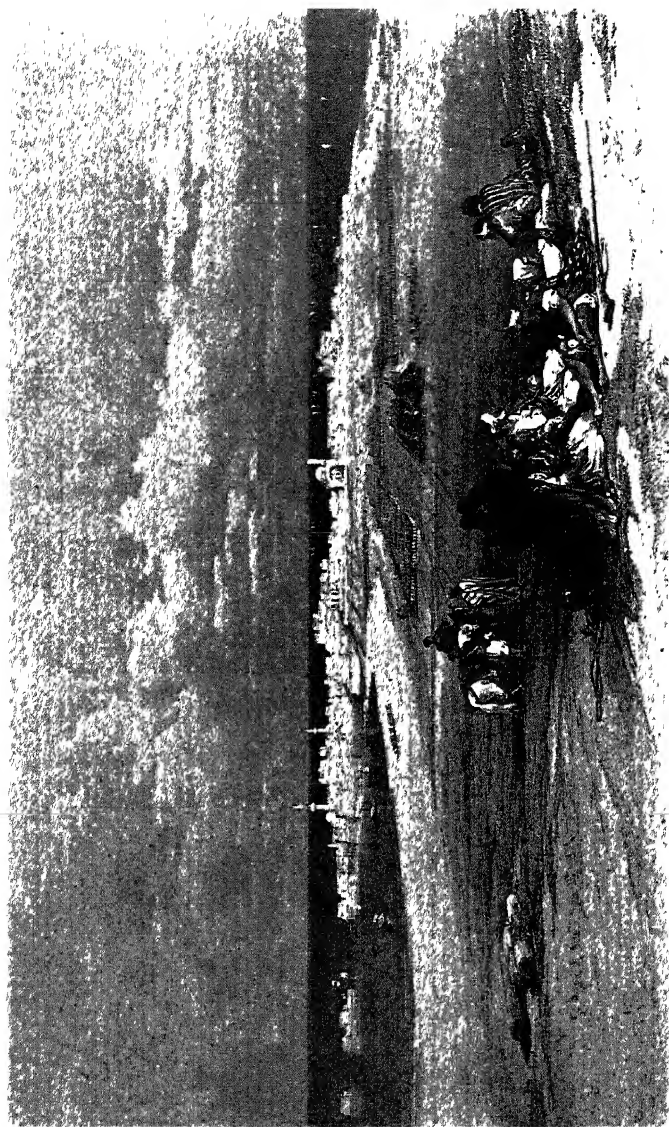


Fig. 45a: The Town of Acco (1839)

in the very dust of Acco, because of his great love for that land.

Acco was famous for its abundance of fish, so that it became proverbial, and if wares were brought to a place which was already plentifully supplied, people of Israel used to say: "You are bringing fish to Acco."

C. The ancients declared that the fish of Acco tasted different from the fish of Sidon, although these two towns are situated on the same coast-line. A fish was once caught in Acco in a heavy rain-storm. Everybody guessed its weight to be three hundred pounds, but when put on the scales it was found to weigh only two hundred pounds. An old fisherman who was standing by said: "Even fish feel the benefit of rain, for after a fall of rain they grow fat."

D. To the east of Acco, there is a little spring which the Arabs call '*Ain al-Sitt*, the Fountain of the Lady (Mary). It is related that at this spring Adam discovered the ox with which he first ploughed his field. Therefore this spring was formerly called '*Ain al-Bakr*, the Fountain of the Ox. It is also said that this is one of the four springs which watered the Garden of Eden, and whoever drank of its waters would be relieved of all pains in life. In medieval times this spring was sacred to Jews, Moslems and Christians, who made pilgrimages to it.

E. A Persian traveler, Nasir Khusrau, who passed through Acco in the year 1047, tells: "Outside the eastern gate and on the left hand there is a spring, to

which you descend by twenty-six steps before reaching the water. This they call the '*Ain al-Bakar*, the Ox Spring, relating that Adam, peace be upon him! discovered this spring and gave his oxen water therefrom, whence its name of the Ox Spring . . . The Court of the Mosque (of Acco) is partly paved with stone and the other part is sown with herbs for, they say, it was here that Adam first practiced husbandry . . ."

#### 143. THE DISCOVERY OF GLASS

It was on the banks of the river Naamen, which flows near Acco, and was known to the Greeks as Belus, that glass was first discovered.

A. Some Phoenicians were sailing from Egypt along the seacoast of Palestine. In their boats they carried a cargo of natron in large lumps. As they approached Phoenicia a great storm arose and in fear thereof the sailors landed on the shore close to the river Belus.

The sailors wished to cook themselves some food, but along this vast stretch of sand (see Fig. 46), they could not find stones round which to prepare the fire under their cooking vessels. So they brought from their boat the lumps of natron and placed their cooking vessel upon these, lighting the fire underneath. When they had finished cooking, they noticed, to their deep astonishment, that the natron had melted in the heat of the fire and had combined with the sand, creating a new material which was clear and transparent, namely glass.



Fig. 46: The Sand of the Coast

B. The children of Zebulun inherited Haifa Bay together with the barren sands surrounding it. Zebulun came before the Almighty and said, "O Lord of the Universe, my brothers have inherited fields and vineyards and to me have fallen these barren sands." And the Lord answered, "Be not sad, Zebulun, as I live forever, all the tribes of Israel will be dependent upon you on account of these barren sands, for you will provide glass for all the people in the Land."

C. The historian Flavius Josephus writes: "The very small river Belus runs by it (the city of Acco) at the distance of two furlongs; near which there is Memnon's monument, and hath near it a place no larger than a hundred cubits, which deserves admiration; for the place is round and hollow, and affords such sand as glass is made of; which place, when it hath been emptied by the many ships there loaded, is filled again by the winds, which bring into it, as it were on purpose, that sand which lay remote, and was no more than bare common sand, while this mine presently turns it into glassy sand; and, what is to me still more wonderful, that glassy sand which is superfluous, and is once removed out of the place, becomes bare common sand again; and this is the nature of the place we are speaking of."

#### 144. THE LADDERS OF TYRE

To the north of Acco, the mountains of Galilee penetrate to the Mediterranean Sea. Over these mountains along the sea-coast stretches the road from

Acco to Tyre, which is in Syria. The road there is steep and uneven so that it appears like going up and down a ladder. For that reason the Jews call this place *Sulamot de-Zor*, the ladders of Tyre.

It is said of Abraham that in his wanderings over many lands, he came to *Aram Naharaim* (Mesopotamia) where he saw the inhabitants spending their time in eating and drinking and in all forms of frivolity. Therefore he said: "May I never have a share in any of these lands." When he came to *Erez Israel* and arrived at the ladders of Tyre, he saw the inhabitants of the land ploughing and tilling the soil at the appointed time and sowing and reaping in due course. Therefore he said: "This is the land that I would ask of the Lord as my portion." And the Lord said to him: "Unto thy seed have I given this land!"

#### 145. THE CAVE OF SIGHS

North of Acco, on the way to Tyre which was so famed in ancient times, there stretches into the sea a chain of mountains, the Ladders of Tyre. The waves and breakers of the sea which lick at their foot have hollowed many caves and crannies in them. The top of one of the mountains which gives a fine view of the Bay of Haifa is called *Ras al-Nakura*, The head of the cavity.

In former times a steep and crooked path wound its way up the Ladders of Tyre, where today is the modern



highway. Walking, and still more riding, on this track was very dangerous. The Arabs in the district tell of a terrible accident here. Once a bride whose bridegroom dwelt in Tyre came from Acco and was being led up the path upon a gaily caparisoned mare. Following the bride came a great assembly of relatives and friends, all dancing joyfully to the drums and cymbals. The throng came to the Ladders of Tyre and twined along the narrow winding way, when suddenly the mare's forelegs slipped; and the bride was sent hurtling into the sea.

And when one nears one of the caves in the lower parts of the hills of the Ladders of Tyre (see Fig. 47), one hears the quiet sobbing of this unfortunate bride. So that cave is called *Magharat al-Nauh*, "The Cave of Sighs," to this day.



Fig. 47: The Cave of Sighs



## XIX. THE PLAIN OF JEZREEL

“THE PLAIN OF JEZREEL IS THE  
BATTLEFIELD OF THE NATIONS.”



## 146. THE LAND OF ISSACHAR

A. In the days when the land of Canaan was divided amongst the tribes of Israel, the central part of the plain of Jezreel fell to the tribe of Issachar. When Jacob blessed his sons, he said: "Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens, and he saw that the rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant."

Why should the tribe of Issachar have been singled out for such a comparison? questioned the Sages of Israel. The answer given is: "Because the shape of the territory of the tribe of Issachar resembles the back of an ass. As the back of an ass slopes on either side and the backbone is raised, so also is the territory of Issachar, which has two valleys and a mountain between them. The one valley on the one side stretches from Afuleh to the village of Jezreel, and the other valley stretches out between the mountains of Tabor and Nazareth. The mountain which divides the valleys is called *Gib'at ha-Moreh* (the little Hermon) and rises like the backbone of an ass above that part of the plain of Jezreel which was the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar."

B. The valley of Jezreel (see Fig. 47a), is known in Arabic as: *Marj ibn-Amer*, the valley of the son of Amer. It is said to be called so after Ahab, the son of Omri king of Israel, whose capital was Jezreel, now the village of Zarin. The Arab sings:

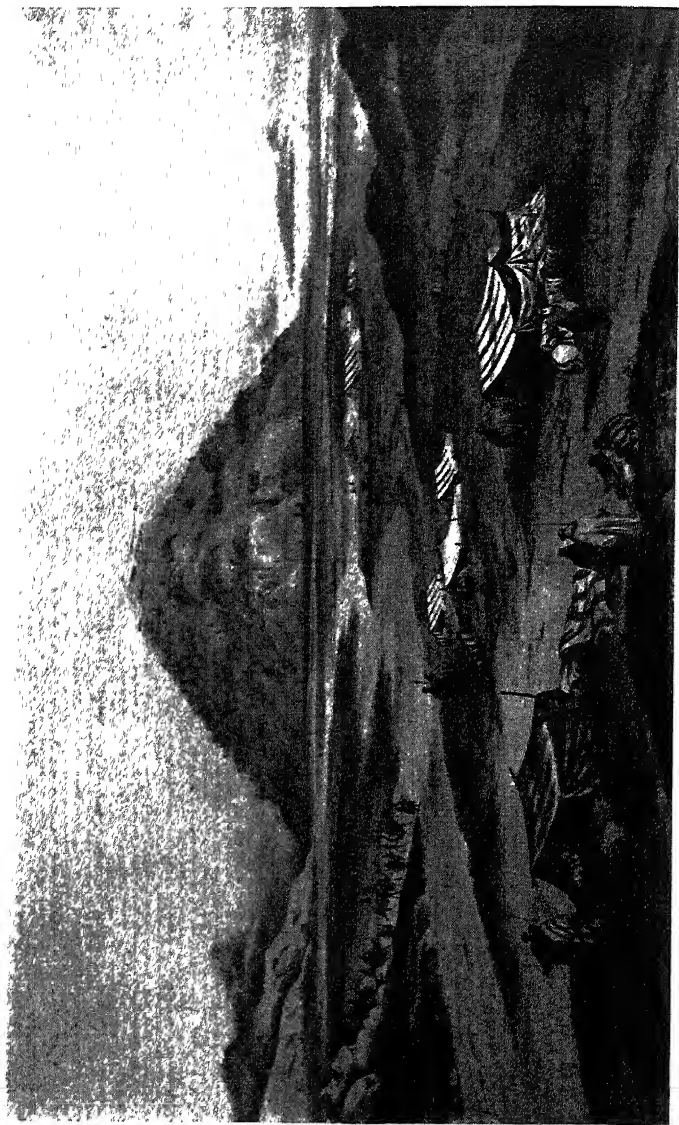


Fig. 47a: The Valley of Jezreel (1858)

"My heart is sore, and I know not what ails it.  
It wishes shelled eggs (as plentiful) as the pebbles  
of the vale.  
And that the fort of the river Tabbok were purest  
butter.  
And that it had a piece of bread as big as the  
valley of Jezreel.  
O God make me patient until the meal is cooked!

Another Arab, whom the feeling of love overwhelmed,  
sings thus:

O my beloved one with the black eyes,  
Your appearance is worth millions.  
It is worth (the colony) Hedera and the valley of  
Jezreel  
And the valley of Hawareth which is sown!

#### 147. THE RIVER KISHON

The children of Israel who lived at the time of the Exodus were men of little faith. When they saw the six hundred chariots of the Egyptians drawn into the sea, they did not believe that they had been destroyed. They still feared them and said to God, "Just as we came out on one side, so will they come out on the other side."

Then God said to the Ruler of the Sea, "Let the sea cast forth the six hundred dead Egyptians on to the dry land, so that all Israel may see them." And the Ruler of the Sea answered, "Lord of the Universe! Is it right for the master to demand the return of the gift He has bestowed upon His slave? Why then should I return the dead Egyptians?" And the Lord replied, "The day





Fig. 47b: The Valley of the River Kishon

will come when I shall give you half as much again. In place of the six hundred, you shall receive nine hundred." And the Ruler of the Sea answered, "Can the servant make demands upon his master? How then shall I be able to claim it from you?" And the Lord replied, "The river of Kishon shall be My pledge." The Ruler of the Sea agreed, and immediately he cast forth on to the land the bodies of the Egyptians. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore."

After several generations, when Israel dwelt securely in his land, the Canaanites came upon it, led by Sisera. Sisera was wont to pay his soldiers regularly, but now they came to him and said, "We will serve you without pay, for we long to fill our bellies with the waters of Palestine." For this reason the prophetess Deborah sang:

"The Kings came and fought,  
Then fought the Kings of Canaan.  
In Taanah by the waters of Megiddo.  
They took no gain of money."

And thus it was that Sisera came with nine hundred chariots in order to overrun the valley of Jezreel. The Canaanites were armed each with a long iron spear, and when the Lord saw them, He diverted the stars from their courses so as to draw them closer to the Canaanites. The heat of the stars warmed their spears till they glowed and the Canaanites could not seize

hold of them. Therefore they went to the waters of the Kishon in order to cool both themselves and their spears.

In that moment, the Lord said to the ancient river of Kishon, "Do you remember the pledge that I gave for you, when the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea? Go and fulfill that pledge to the Ruler of the Sea." Immediately the waters of the Kishon rose, swallowed up the Canaanites and delivered them into the great sea.

When the Ruler of the Sea beheld this great gift, the fish opened their mouths and said: "Righteous is the Lord forever. Praise be unto Him." And the prophetess Deborah in her song of triumph says:

"Hear ye Kings!  
Give ear, O ye princes!  
They fought from Heaven,  
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.  
The river of Kishon swept them away,  
That ancient river, the river of Kishon."

#### 148. THE RIVER GINNAI

In the town of Jinin, on the borders of Samaria in the southern corner of the valley of Jezreel, there stood a town named En-Gannim, the fountain of gardens. In the days of the second temple this was known as Ginnah, and as at the present time, it was a thoroughfare on the high road from Galilee to Judea (see Fig. 48).

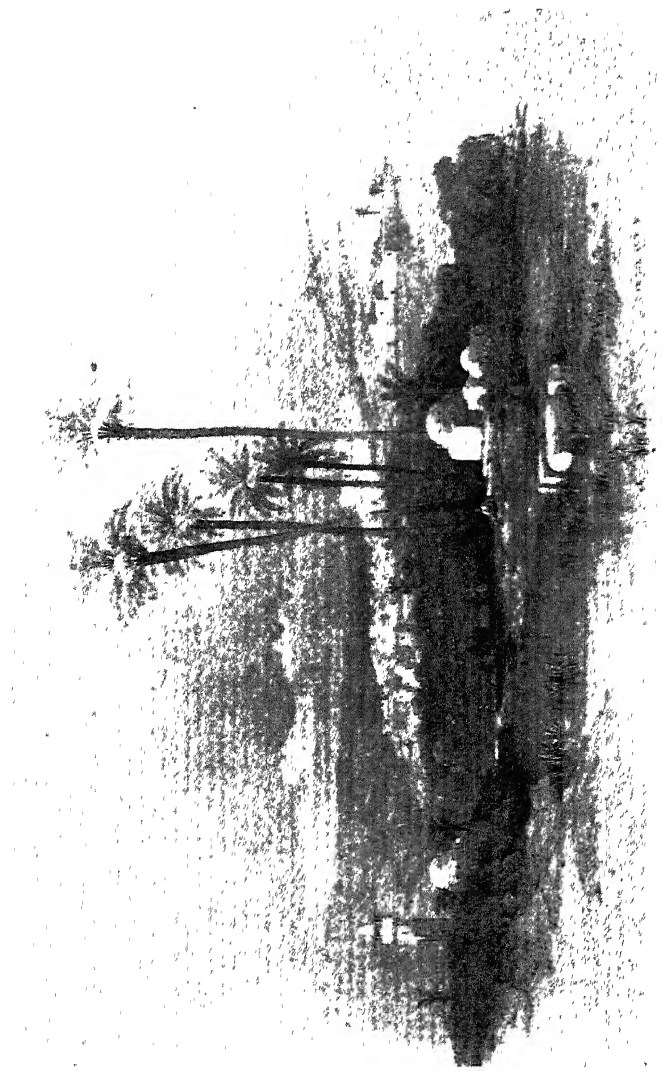


Fig. 48: The Village of Jinin and its River (1839)

In this village there springs a fountain which is the source of one of the tributaries of the river Kishon, and in the rainy season, when the tributary overflowed, it was dangerous to cross over it except by means of a bridge.

Once when Rabbi Phinehas the son of Yair was traveling on an errand of charity, he arrived at the tributary of Ginnai, at a time when it was in flood, and he said to it: "Ginnai, Ginnai, divide thy waters so that I may pass over thee," and the rivulet answered him: "Thou art about to carry out the command of thy Creator, to bring charity to the people, and I too am carrying out the command of my Creator, to flow to the sea. But thou canst not say for certain if thou wilt succeed, whereas I am already succeeding." Whereupon Rabbi Phinehas said: "If thou dost not divide thy waters now for me, thou shalt become dried up and never again have waters to divide." The rivulet grew afraid and divided its waters.

With Rabbi Phinehas there was another man who had with him wheat which he was carrying to distribute amongst the poor for Passover. Rabbi Phinehas turned to the rivulet and said: "Divide also thy waters for this man, who is engaged upon an errand of charity." And the rivulet again divided its waters. Finally there was an Arab who accompanied them and for whom Rabbi Phinehas demanded of the rivulet that it divide its waters, so that it should not be said: "Is this the way you treat the stranger within your land?" And the rivulet once again divided its waters.

## 149. THE VALLEY OF BETH-SHEAN

A. In the broad valley of the Jordan close to the mountain of Gilboa is situated Beth-Shean, one of the oldest towns of the world. Round it stretches a valley, which in bygone days was one of the most fruitful spots of the land and is now for a great part covered with swamps. This valley was the inheritance of the tribe of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. And Jacob blessed his children and to Joseph the father of Manasseh he said: "Joseph is a fruitful bough . . . And by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under" . . . The Sages of Israel said: "That is Beth-Shean and its valley!"

One of the Sages of Israel was discussing the site of the Garden of Eden. Said Resh Lakish: "If the Garden of Eden is in Palestine then its gate is at Beth-Shean."

B. Mohammed describes in the Koran the paradise which is prepared for his believers! "And for him who fears to stand before his Lord, are two gardens. In both of them two fountains flow . . . In both of them two springs gush forth . . ."

The Moslems say that the two springs "gushing forth" are the fountain of Zamzam and the fountain of Acco (see Legend 142D), and the two "flowing fountains" are the spring of Beth-Shean (Baisan) and the spring of Silwan in Jerusalem.

On the south of Beth-Shean there is a small spring

which is called in Arabic '*Ain 'Um al-Fluss*', the spring of the mother with the coins. It is said that this is one of the four fountains of paradise, and he who drinks from it will be saved from the pains of the next world.

### 150. THE FOUNTAIN OF GOLIATH

At the foot of the mountain of Gilboa, flows a fountain, which in biblical times was called: En-harod, the trembling Fountain (see Fig. 49). "Then Jerubbaal who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early and pitched besides the well of Harod . . . So he brought down the people unto the water. And the Lord said unto Gideon: 'Everyone that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise everyone that boweth down upon his knees to drink'."

According to an old tradition, near the fountain of En-harod was also the battlefield of David and Goliath. The pilgrim from Bordeaux, who visited Palestine in the year 333 C.E., writes about the city of Jezreel (Stradela), which is not far from the fountain of Harod: "Here reigned King Ahab and here also Helias prophesied. This is the field in which David slew Goliath."

A Jewish scholar Rabbi Parhi, who lived in Beth-Shean, writes (ca. 1314): "Eastwards from the city of Jezreel, there is a fountain flowing from Mount Gilboa



Fig. 49: The Fountain of Goliath (1890)



and called by the Arabs: '*Ain Jalut*, the fountain of Goliath. They say that a fight took place there between David and Goliath . . .'

### 151. GILBOA THE BARREN MOUNTAIN

On the mountain of Gilboa which rises from the plain of Jezreel was fought the great war between the Philistines and the children of Israel, wherein Saul the first king of Israel was slain.

"The Philistines gathered themselves together and came and pitched in Gilboa. When Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him: 'Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor'."

The village of Endor exists to this very day and its inhabitants still show the visitor a small cave called: *Magharat al-Ajuzah*, the cave of the old woman.

When David heard of the tragic death of Saul and Jonathan, he mourned after them and pronounced the lamentation:

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high  
places,  
How are the mighty fallen! . . .

Ye mountains of Gilboa  
Let there be no dew,  
Neither let there be rain upon you!"

Since this time the mountain of Gilboa has been barren and desolate.

## 152. TABOR AND CARMEL

"Surely as Tabor among the mountains and as Carmel by the sea."

The valley of Jezreel is girded with mountains and hills which add to its glory and splendor. To the south rise the mountains of Samaria, joined by the range of the Carmel. The north is dominated by the rounded crest of Mount Tabor (see Fig. 50).

A. When the Lord was about to give the Torah to Israel on Mount Sinai, all the mountains with the Tabor and the Carmel rushed to Him in anger, exclaiming, "From my slopes alone should the Law be given unto Israel." And the Lord, blessed be He, answered them and said, "On your slopes idolaters have worshiped, but never on Mount Sinai, therefore have I chosen it."

B. When the Lord wished to give the Torah to the children of Israel, both the Tabor and the Carmel came to Him. First the Tabor spoke and said proudly, "I am Tabor, and on me should rest the Divine Presence (*Shekinah*), for I am the loftiest mountain and the waters of the deluge did not cover me."



Fig. 50: The Beautiful Mount Tabor

Then the Carmel said arrogantly, "I am Carmel, and on me should rest the Divine Presence, for when you divided the waters of the Red Sea it was I who placed myself there so that the children of Israel could pass over me."

The Lord, blessed be He, replied, "Just because of your pride and your arrogance, I cannot countenance your claim."

C. In the days to come, the Lord will bring the mountains Sinai, Carmel and Tabor together, and Jerusalem shall be placed on their slopes, and the Temple on their summits.

How do we know this? Because the prophet Isaiah said: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it."

Rabbi Hanina said, "Moreover, God will sing and all the mountains will respond with singing and chanting."

### 153. THE CAVE OF MELCHIZEDEK

In the days of Abraham came Amraphel king of Shinar and other kings and they made war with the king of Sodom, Gomorrah and other kings. "All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea . . . And the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain . . ."

Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him "took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods and departed . . . And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods . . . And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said: 'Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth!'"

On the slope of Mount Tabor was shown the cave where Melchizedek lived when Abraham came to him. The Russian pilgrim, Abbot Daniel, who visited the Holy Land in the year 1106 C.E., writes:

"They show you upon mount Tabor, at a level place, an extraordinary cave cut in the rock, like a cellar, which has a small window in the roof. At the bottom of the cave towards the east there is an altar. The door of the cave is very small, and you descend by steps from the west side. Small fig trees grow in front of the entrance, and around them are other kinds of trees; there was formerly a large forest there, but now there are only small shrubs. The holy Melchizedek dwelt in this small cave, and there Abraham visited him and called him three times, saying: 'Man of God! . . .'

There Melchizedek blessed Abraham, who cut his hair and nails, for Melchizedek was hairy . . .”

#### 154. THE HILL OF SHIMRON

On the slopes of the hill of Shimron near the colony Nahalal grow a few shrubs of the white acacia (*Acacia albidia*). This plant is very rarely found in the country.

Many generations ago, there emigrated from Arabia the sons of the tribe of Beni Hilal (the children of the Crescent), famous for its great wars and its heroes. These sons of the desert wandered over all the Holy Land, and the valley of Jezreel was their battlefield.

Once they camped on the hill of Shimron (*Tel Samunie*), and pitched their tents there. After a time they decided to go up to the Holy City, and they gathered their tents together and went on their way. But the sons of Hilal forgot to take out of the earth some of their tent-pegs. In the course of time these pegs took root, sprouted forth into branches and became bushes. These are the acacia bushes which are to be seen to this day.

Near the hill of Shimron, in the village of Malul, there are ruins of an ancient building, called by the Arabs *Kaṣr al-Zir*, the Palace of Zir. Amir Zir was one of the great warriors of the sons of Hilal. To the north of the village, stretches a plateau called *Maidan al-Zir*, the race course of Zir. Here on this mountain the Amir Zir always appeared mounted on his noble steed and all the on-lookers marveled at his skillful riding.

## 155. SIMONIA AND TARBENET

A. Near the colony of Nahalal, on the hill of Shimron which rises above the highroad from Haifa to Nazareth, there was in biblical times the city of Shimron and in the talmudical age a Jewish village called Simonia.

Once Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, the great prince of Israel, passed by this town, and its inhabitants came to meet him, saying: "My lord, appoint for us a man who will read to us the written Law and teach us the oral Law, so that he may act as a judge in our midst."

Rabbi Judah appointed Rabbi Levi the son of Sisi, who came to Simonia, where the people built for him a high pulpit upon which he could stand. Many questions did they put to him, but he could not reply. Rabbi Levi was so sorely troubled by this that he rose early the following morning and returned to Rabbi Judah, who asked him: "What have the people of Simonia done unto you?" Rabbi Levi answered, "Do not remind me of my troubles. They asked me three questions, not one of which I could answer."

"Why did you not answer them?" Rabbi Levi replied: "They built for me a high pulpit, and placed me upon it. My heart became so filled with pride that the words of the Law disappeared from my mind."

B. In olden days there were a number of Jewish towns scattered over the plain of Jezreel, many of which had become ruined mounds but have since been rebuilt by Jewish pioneers.

In the neighborhood of the town of Afulah, at the side of the railway to Haifa, there stands one of these mounds, called in Arabic *Tarbana*, where once the Jewish town of Tarbeneth flourished. In this town there was once a teacher called Rabbi Simon who, as he sat and taught, recited the lessons and the explanations so quickly that the children could not follow him. Therefore the men of Tarbeneth came and begged of him that when he read the Law to his pupils he should pause at every sentence so that they would be able to read with him.

Rabbi Simon, who apparently was very obstinate, would not listen to them. He went to Rabbi Hanina at Sepphoris and told him the whole story. Rabbi Hanina said to him: "Even if they threaten to cut off your head, do not listen to them. For the Law is deep and the children must hasten to learn and know it . . ."

Rabbi Simon returned to Tarbeneth and continued to teach as he was wont to do. Whereupon the people of Tarbeneth would not allow him to continue as teacher of their children . . .

## 156. THE MOUNT OF CAIN

On the borders of the plain of Jezreel, close to the foot of the mountains of Carmel and Samaria, there is a beautiful hill upon which stood Jokneam, a royal city of the Canaanites which was taken by Joshua, the son of Nun, and given to the tribe of Zebulun. Now it is a forsaken mount called *Tel Keimon*.



A. The Samaritans tell about the war which was fought here between Joshua, the son of Nun, and king Shaubak, the son of Hamam. Shaubak, desiring to avenge the death of his father, who was killed in battle with the children of Israel, entered into a league with the neighboring kings. They all came with their army to Keimon. Joshua with his army came from Mount Gerizim to fight with them. Suddenly Joshua with all his followers was enclosed by seven iron walls, called into existence by the magic of the enemy. At Joshua's prayer a dove appeared by which he sent a letter to Nabih, the son of Gilead, king of the two and a half tribes of Israel which remained in the territory east of the Jordan. Nabih came with a great army to Keimon and Shaubak was defeated. At the shouting of Nabih's soldiers the walls about Joshua disappeared and Joshua with his people were saved in peace.

B. In medieval times a city of the name of Caymont stood on this site. It is thought that this name is a contraction of the two words cayn mount, the Mount of Cain, because he was killed here.

After Cain killed Abel his brother, God cursed him: "And Cain said unto the Lord: 'My punishment is greater than I can bear . . . I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth . . . everyone that findeth me shall slay me!' And the Lord said unto him: 'Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

Cain, with the mark which resembled a horn, used to wander round this mountain. There was a man called Lamech, who was blind, and his son held his hand and led him to the hunt. When the son saw an animal, he said: "I see an animal!" and his father drew the bow and killed his prey. Once Lamech and his son went hunting, when they came to a hill, and the son, seeing the horn of Cain, who was among the bushes, mistook him for a deer and said: "I see an animal!" Lamech took his bow, shot the arrow and killed Cain. When his son went to fetch in the prey he found Cain dying and said: "Alas! that is my grandfather!" Lamech was in great agony and when he came to his wives, he said:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,  
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech,  
For I have slain a man to my wounding,  
And a young man to my hurt.  
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,  
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold!"

## 157. THE TOWN OF SEPPHORIS

"The people of Sepphoris have a hard heart, they fear the words of the Law, but they do not bow down before it!"

After the destruction of Jerusalem many Jews emigrated from Judea to Galilee and founded there many villages and towns. A very important town in lower Galilee was Sepphoris (*Zippori*), which is now an Arab village called Saffurie, not far from Nazareth.

“Why was this town called *Zippori* (the Bird)?” asked the Sages of Israel. “Because Zippori is perched like a bird (in Hebrew *Zippor*) on the top of the mountain.”

Sepphoris was a great center of Hebrew culture. Here lived many scholars of Israel. The most famous of them was Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi (the Prince), who lived in the second century. He died at Sepphoris and not one of his pupils had the heart to announce his death to the anxious people of the town until the clever Bar Kappara broke the news in the form of a parable, saying: “The heavenly hosts and the earth-born men held the tables of the covenant: and the heavenly hosts were victorious and seized the tables!”

In medieval times the tomb of Rabbi Judah was shown in Sepphoris. The traveler Pethahiah writes: “At Sepphoris our holy Rabbi (Judah) is buried. A pleasing odor ascends from his grave. This odor is smelt at a distance of a mile from his grave.”

## XX. TIBERIAS AND HER SHRINES

“TIBERIAS IS THE LOWEST TOWN OF  
GALILEE  
IN TIBERIAS WILL BEGIN THE REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL.”



## 158. THE PRAISE OF TIBERIAS

A. Herod the Great built a city on the shores of the sea of Galilee and called it Tiberias in honor of Tiberius, Emperor of Rome. The Jews were not pleased that their city should be called after the name of a Roman Emperor, and they said that the name Tiberias is derived from the Hebrew word *Tabur*, a center, "because Tiberias is the center of Galilee." Others say that the name Tiberias is a contraction of the two Hebrew words *Tobah Re'iyah*, good landscape. Truly the surroundings of Tiberias are exceedingly beautiful (see Figs. 51-52, 55).



Fig. 51: The City of Tiberias



Fig. 52: Tiberias and its Surroundings

B. Antoninus, the Roman Emperor, once said to Rabbi Judah the Holy, Prince of the Jews: "I am anxious that my son Severus should be my successor, and that the town of Tiberias should be a free colony for ever. The Roman Senate will, no doubt, sanction one of the points, but not both. I therefore ask your advice: What am I to do to secure both?"

Instead of replying verbally, the Rabbi ordered two men to appear before the Emperor and caused one to ride upon the shoulders of the other. He gave a pigeon to the rider and said to the other: "Tell the man whom you carry to let the pigeon fly." The Emperor said: "I comprehend your meaning. First I am to get the Senate to declare my son as my successor, and then get my son to proclaim Tiberias as a free colony."

C. It is said that Tiberias lies lowest of all cities in Galilee, and that from here the Messiah will appear and the Jews will be redeemed and conducted thence to the Temple in Jerusalem. God will give the Messiah a wanderer's stick made of onyx. This stick is hidden in Tiberias; it is the self-same rod which God gave to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and Elijah, and it was in the hand of every king till the Temple was destroyed.



## 159. HOW TIBERIAS WAS CLEANED

The town of Tiberias was built on a cemetery and for that reason many Jews and especially the priests refused to live there till Rabbi Simon the son of Yohai came and cleaned the town.

When R. Simon lived in hiding from the Romans in the cave of Meron (see Legend 200), his body was afflicted with various skin diseases. And when he left the cave he took a bath in the hot spring of Tiberias and was cured. Then he came to the inhabitants of Tiberias and asked them: "Is there anything that needs to be improved in your town?" He was told that there were places in the town which were considered unclean, but their exact location was not known and therefore the priests were afraid to approach the town.

Resolving to remove the uncleanness, R. Simon took seeds of the lupin plant<sup>1</sup> and sowed them in all these suspected places. The seeds did not grow in the places where the ground was hard and thus he understood that there were no dead bodies buried there. But in every case where the ground was soft because of the corpses beneath, the lupin seed grew and flourished. In this manner R. Simon learned that these places were unclean, and thus with the help of the lupin plant he was able to determine the unclean places of the town.

<sup>1</sup>In Botany, *Lupinus Termis*; in Hebrew and Arabic, *Turmos*.

To annoy and discredit R. Simon, a certain Samaritan secretly placed one of the dead bodies in a cleaned spot. But R. Simon learned through the power of the Holy Spirit what the Samaritan had done, and said: "Let what is above the ground go down and what is below the ground come up." Immediately the Samaritan was entombed. A schoolmaster of the village Migdala, who mocked R. Simon for his declaration, was turned into a heap of bones.

## 160. TWELVE MONTHS IN TIBERIAS

Of the people of Tiberias it is said:

That for two months in the year they dance, for is not Tiberias the kingdom of the fleas?

For two months in the year they gorge themselves upon the fruit of the *Nubak*<sup>1</sup> (Jujube), for it grows wild and costs them nought.

For two months in the year they beat the air with fly flaps, for they must chase the wasps from the meat and the fruit.

For two months in the year they walk abroad naked, for the heat of the sun is great in Tiberias.

For two months in the year they make music upon the reed, for they love to suck sugar cane which is like unto a reed.

<sup>1</sup>*Nubak* is the Arabic name of the bush which is called in Botany: *Zizyphus*, *Spina-Christi*, and grows abundantly in the environs of Tiberias. Now the bush is called *Sidrah* and its fruits, *Dom*.

For two months in the year they wallow in mud, for the earth is soft with the rain, and the streets are muddy.

## 161. THE MIRACLE OF TIBERIAS

In the eighteenth century, there lived in Galilee a Bedouin Sheikh, named Taher Al-Amer, who rebelled against the Turkish Government and made Galilee his kingdom. In those days, the city of Tiberias was waste and desolate and no man dwelt therein. The Sheikh restored its ruins and invited the Jews to come and inhabit it. He wrote to Rabbi Hayyim Abu-al-Afia, saying: "Come and inherit Tiberias the land of your fathers."

Thus there grew up in Tiberias a great Jewish community. The people flourished and became prosperous, rejoicing in their well-being, for the land was free from all evil and fear was unknown. Peace reigned as in the days of Solomon, but alas, it was not to last long. The ruler of Damascus gathered a great army against the rebellious Sheikh and strongly besieged Tiberias.

After some time the city was shut fast, none came in and none went out; and the inhabitants, Arabs and Jews alike, remained on guard so that the enemy could not break through.

It is well known that the greater conquers the lesser, but in this case a miracle came to pass. The men of Tiberias were few and their roads were closed, while

the ruler of Damascus commanded a great army of men skilled in war and used to every stratagem. Nevertheless, he was not successful.

This proved to the eyes of all mankind that a miracle came from the Lord. For at the end of eighty-five days, on the Sabbath day, December 1, 1742, the siege was raised and joy reigned in Tiberias.

The Jews went into their synagogues glad of heart and rejoicing, and they sang as on the days of the holidays and festivals. On this day a feast was proclaimed to the people of Tiberias, for all future generations. As in the days of Mordecai and Esther they proclaimed the feast of Purim to all Israel, and this day is known as the "Purim of Tiberias."

## 162. THE HOT BATHS OF TIBERIAS

A number of ailing men came to King Solomon and said to him: "O King Solomon, live for ever! Wiser art thou than all men and thou hast adorned Jerusalem and builded the Temple; yet of what avail are these if thou canst find no cure for our ills, our aching limbs, our boils or the leprosy that mars us? We beseech thee to aid and heal the poor!"

Then King Solomon commanded a troop of demons, saying: "Hearken now, ye demons! In Galilee by the city of Tiberias there is a fountain which like all fountains flows but with cold water. Go ye down to the depths of the earth and heat the waters of this foun-

tain!" All the demons feared Solomon and they hastened unto the fount. They dug down to its very source and heated the water. And the hot water sprang out of the deeps; and these are the famed hot springs of Tiberias which cure all such ills as rheumatism, boils or leprosy.

But when the demons began their work, Solomon made them deaf. For he knew well that should news of his death reach them, they would no longer fear him and would cease to heat the founts.

Solomon is dead. But the deaf demons have not yet heard of his death and, thinking that he still lives in his palace at Jerusalem, they continue to heat the fountains to this day.

### 163. RABBI MEIR BA'AL HA-NES

"Whoever weeps over a pious man, God collects his tears and puts them in His treasury."

Near the City of Tiberias is to be found the tomb of Rabbi Meir Ba'al ha-Nes, the master of the miracle. It is one of the holiest places for the Jews in Palestine.

Once the sister-in-law of Rabbi Meir was captured by Romans. R. Meir went to her keeper and asked for her freedom. The keeper said: "I am afraid of the Government." Said R. Meir: "Take these pieces of gold, divide half of them among the officials of the Government and keep the other half for yourself." "But what shall I do," said the keeper, "when the sum will be spent?" R.

Meir said to him: "Say: 'O God of R. Meir, deliver me!' and you will be delivered." "But," said the keeper, "how do I know that it will be so?" "You shall see even now that it will be so," said R. Meir.

Close by there were savage dogs who attacked people when teased. R. Meir threw stones at them and they sprang upon him. But no sooner had he said: "O God of R. Meir, deliver me!" than the dogs left him alone. The keeper thereupon set his sister-in-law free.

Eventually the affair reached the ears of the Government and they summoned the keeper and condemned him to be hanged. At the gallows he called out: "O God of R. Meir, deliver me!" The executioners took him down and questioned him, and he told them all that had occurred between R. Meir and himself. Thereupon they made a likeness of Rabbi Meir in accordance with the description he gave them and placed it at the gate of Rome, with a notice to the effect that whoever saw a man resembling the image should apprehend him and bring him to the authorities. But Rabbi Meir always eluded his captors and so his life was saved.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Wherever Jews live, collection boxes find a place in their houses and synagogues. These boxes are labeled: "Charity of Rabbi Meir Ba'al ha-Nes." On an occasion of joy or sorrow; if one is about to start on a journey or return from one; if one has just completed a business transaction, or sustained a loss, or is about to light the Sabbath candles; he places a coin in the box and says: "Behold I am giving this free gift as a charity for the poor of the land of Israel," and repeats loudly three times: "O God of R. Meir, answer me! May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, as Thou didst hear the prayer of Thy servant Meir, of blessed memory, and didst perform for him miracles and wonders, so likewise do for me and for all Thy people Israel, who are in need of public and private miracles. Amen! Selah."

## 164. THE MIRACLE OF THE PILLARS

One day, in the month of Shebat, the Jews of Tiberias began to raise a building over the holy grave of Rabbi Meir Ba'al ha-Nes. While they were busy laying the foundation, they discovered two pillars close to the tomb and the people asked if it would not be better to clear away the dust from the tomb and put these pillars over the tomb. Next day fifty men gathered together and toiled mightily until the pillars were moved from the place. With the help of iron bars and ropes, they succeeded in lifting one of the pillars and placed it on the tomb. By this time night was approaching, so they decided to delay the lifting of the second pillar till the next day, but they were sorely grieved that they were obliged to leave the grave with only one pillar placed upon it. But they were to behold the miracle of the Lord. The pillar gave a mighty spring from its place and fell close beside its neighbor on the grave of the holy Rabbi. The earth resounded with the noise and the spectators fled. But when they realized that the pillar rested beside the first one, they clapped their hands, danced joyfully and sang songs of thanksgiving. This miracle took place before the congregation of Israel. Happy is he who was privileged to witness it.

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## 165. THE GRAVE OF JEREMIAH

"Whoever weeps over a pious man, all his sins are forgiven."

On the road from Tiberias to the Hot Springs and the grave of Rabbi Meir there is a cairn marking the last resting place of Rabbi Jeremiah, who was head of the great college *Sidra Rabba* in the fourth century. From this academy came many scholars and men learned in the tradition of Israel.

Rabbi Jeremiah used to move among the ordinary folk and would speak of the speedily approaching days of the Messiah. When he lay dying on his bed of sickness, he instructed his pupils: "Clothe me in white garments with sleeves, put stockings and shoes on my feet, place a staff in my hand and lay me down on my side. Thus equipped, when the Messiah comes I shall be ready to follow him."

## 166. THE CAVE OF RAB KAHANA

Above the grave of Rabbi Jeremiah, at the foot of the mountains of Tiberias, is a cave in which, according to tradition, Rab Kahana lies buried.

A. Many years ago there lived in Tiberias a certain man who did not believe in the sanctity of the tombs. It was his habit to go to the sacred graves and mock those who came there to pray. With evil mockery and scornful words he would drive them away, and through him the sanctity of the graves was violated.



Once when he came to Rab Kahana's grave, he found a group of men prostrating themselves in prayer. So he asked them in mockery, "Which of the saints lies buried here?" They told him it was the grave of Rab Kahana. Then the unbeliever, laughing at them, said, "Why did you bury him here? How do you know it was just here? Who made up this tale?" Ere he had stopped speaking, a snake came out of a cleft of the cave and bit him and he fell dead. Since then a snake is carved above the entrance as a warning to scoffers for all time.

B. When Rab Kahana, who was well-known as a great scholar of the Law, ascended from Babylon to the Land of Israel, the people said, "A lion is come up from Babylon." Rabbi Johanan, who was very old and had heavy overhanging eyebrows, said to his pupils, "Lift up my eyebrows so that I can see Rab Kahana!"

Rab Kahana's lips were drawn up by nature, and gave the appearance of one laughing. When R. Johanan looked at R. Kahana he thought that Kahana was laughing at him. He became very dejected and Rab Kahana died. On the morrow, Rabbi Johanan said to the Sages, "Did you see what that Babylonian did? He laughed at me!" They answered: "His lips are formed that way and he always appears as though he were laughing." Rabbi Johanan repented and went to the cave of Rab Kahana and found a snake at the mouth. Said he to the snake, "Turn aside and let the master go to the pupil." The snake did not move.

"Let comrade go to comrade." It did not move. "Let the pupil go to the master." And the snake immediately departed. R. Johanan prayed at the grave and Rab Kahana came to life again.

### 167. RABBI AKIBA AND HIS PUPILS

On the slope of the mountain which overlooks the town of Tiberias is the grave of Rabbi Akiba, the great fighter for the freedom of Israel, who was martyred in Caesarea in the second century.

After Rabbi Akiba was put to death in the prison of Caesarea, the capital of the Romans in Palestine, Elijah the prophet came to the house of Joshua ha-Girsi, the servant of Akiba, and said to him: "Peace be with you, my master and teacher. I am Elijah and I have come to tell you that Akiba has died in prison."

Immediately the two of them betook themselves to the prison and, finding the gate open and the warder and prisoners asleep, they put the body of Akiba on a pallet and went on their way . . . they carried him the whole night, up hill and down dale, till they came to a cave where they found a chair, a table and a lamp. They put down the pallet of Rabbi Akiba and went away. As soon as they had left, the candle kindled itself and the cave closed up. When Elijah saw this he exclaimed:—"Happy are you in death, Rabbi Akiba, for you have found a pleasant resting place."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>According to another tradition Rabbi Akiba was buried in the forrress of Antipatris (see Legend 123).

Round the grave of Akiba are buried his 12,000 pupils. It is said that they all died in the short period between the Passover and the feast of Pentecost because they were envious of, and did not respect, one another.

### 168. RABBI HIYYA AND RAB HUNA

A. On the slope of the mountains which face the city of Tiberias, there is the tomb of Hiyya the son of Abba, a well known Rabbi who lived in the second century. He emigrated from Babylon to Tiberias, and from love of the land he used to kiss the dust of Tiberias. It was said that after the arrival of Hiyya in Palestine storms no longer occurred nor did wine turn sour. His prayers are said to have brought rain in a time of drought and to have caused a lion, which had rendered the roads unsafe, to leave Palestine. When he died stones of fire fell from heaven.

Once Resh Lakish was pointing out the caves of the scholars. When he came to the cave of Rabbi Hiyya he forgot about it and his mind became weak. He said: "God of the Universe! Did I not learn as he did?" In answer there came a voice from heaven: "Yes, you learned but you did not teach like him!"

B. Rabbi Habiba relates this story: Once I saw a scholar. In the morning his eyes were mild and in the evening they looked like glowing coals. I asked him "Why this change?" He answered: "I asked Elijah

to show me the dead scholars and how they ascend to the house of study in heaven. And Elijah said: 'I will do it. You can look at them, but take care that you do not look on the chair of Rabbi Hiyya!' When I looked, continued the scholar, "I could not restrain myself from glancing also on the seat of Rabbi Hiyya. Then came two sparks of fire which burnt into my eyes and blinded me."

The next day the scholar went to the cave of Rabbi Hiyya and prostrated himself there, saying: "O Rabbi, I have learned your wisdom!" And he was cured.

C. In ancient times the bodies of famous rabbis from Babylon were brought to Palestine to be buried in Tiberias, which was sometimes called in those times by the biblical name Rakkath. On the occasion of such a funeral the people used to say:

"O lovers of remains, you inhabitants of Rakkath, come and accept the dead of the valley (Babylon)!"

Once, while some scholars were walking round Tiberias, they lifted up their eyes and saw a coffin which had been brought from outside for burial in Palestine. Said one of the scholars to his friend: "What is the purpose of bringing the body to be buried in Palestine when the soul departed from it outside of Palestine?" And the other replied: "In the words of the prophet Jeremiah: 'Ye defiled my land (during life) and made mine heritage an abomination' (in death). But when the dead body is buried in the Holy Land, God forgives him!"

D. When Rab Huna, the famous scholar and head of the academy of Babylon in the third century, died, his remains were brought to Tiberias and the scholars came out to meet his body. They were in doubt where to bury him. Some of them said: "Let us bury him in the cave of Rabbi Hiyya. Rabbi Hiyya taught the Law in Israel and Rab Hunah also taught the Law in Israel."

### 169. THE TOMB OF MAIMONIDES

In an enclosed courtyard at Tiberias there is the tomb of Maimonides, the great Jewish philosopher and physician of the twelfth century (see Fig. 53). He is



Fig. 53: The Tomb of Maimonides

better known by the name RaMBaM, the initials of his Hebrew name: Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon. He lived his last years in Egypt as a physician to the grand vizier of Saladin.

Before his death, Maimonides ordered that his coffin should be taken up to the Land of Israel and that he should be buried there; but he did not name any site for his grave. At his death, all the Jews in Egypt, great and small, mourned for him seven days. Then they put his body into a coffin which they sent to Palestine. And they all went with it to the border.

In the Land of Israel, the Jewish communities heard that Rabbi Moses ben Maimon was dead and that his coffin was being brought to be buried in the Holy Land. And they came from all the cities wherein they dwelt, from far and near, to receive the body with all fitting reverence. When they asked the Egyptians where the saint was to be buried, they were told that Maimonides had not told them where he wished his grave to be, and therefore it was left to the Palestinian Jews to decide.

At once a great dispute arose among the different communities. Each produced its own claim. Jerusalem claimed that as it was the heart of the world, that saint should lie upon the Mount of Olives. The men of Hebron said that it would be fitting for him to lie near the holy patriarchs. The people of Meron insisted that they were the most fitting, for among them lay the inspired sage, Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai. There was no

end to the wranglings, and the communities could not agree.

But they suddenly realized that their behavior was an insult to the dead scholar whose coffin was waiting. So they decided to loose the camel and let it wander at will. Where the camel would stop and kneel down by itself, there would the saint's grave be. And this they did.

The camel wandered many days and a great wonder came to pass. No Arabs molested the creature nor did any accident or mischance befall it. Finally, it came to Tiberias and there it kneeled down. So they buried Maimonides in Tiberias and there is his grave to this day.

## XXI. THE SEA OF GALILEE

“FROM ALL THE SEAS WHICH GOD  
CREATED, HE CHOSE FOR HIM ONLY  
THE SEA OF GALILEE!”





## 170. THE SEA OF CHINNERETH

King David sings in the book of Psalms:

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;  
The world, and they that dwell therein;  
For He hath founded it upon the seas  
And established it upon the floods.

The sages of Israel said: The seas and floods which are mentioned by David are the seven seas and four rivers which surround all Palestine. Among them are: the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea and the water of Merom. And among the four rivers are also the Jordan and the Yarmuk which falls into it.

From all the seas which God created He chose only the sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is called in Hebrew: Chinnereth (Gennesareth). Why was it called so? Because the fruits which grow on its banks are as sweet as the fruit of the *Cinnara* (a kind of vegetable).

Others say: Because the voices of the waves of this sea are sweet and pleasant as the voice of the harp, which is called in Hebrew: *Kinnor*. And others say: Not the voices, but the shape, of the sea is like the harp (*Kinnor*) and therefore it was called Chinnereth (see Fig. 54).



Fig. 54: The Sea of Galilee

## 171. THE SEA OF GALILEE

Before the world was created, a tiny little lake hovered in space. It is the lake which is now called the Sea of Galilee, or the Lake of Tiberias, after the town of Tiberias which is on its shores.

And the day came when God Almighty passed over this lake and He saw that the great bird Satanel was swimming on its blue waters. And God said to him, "Who art thou?" "I am God," he answered proudly. "And if thou art God, who am I?" asked the Lord of the Universe. "Thou art God of the gods, and Lord of the lords."

And the Lord of the Universe said to Satanel, "Dive down into the waters and bring up earth and flint." And he did so. And God strewed the earth round Chinnereth and thus dry land was created; and He took the flint and struck upon it with all His might, so that sparks flew from it. From these sparks were created angels, who are the servants of the Almighty. And when Satanel saw the omnipotence of the Almighty, he decided to imitate His deeds. But the Lord was so angered that He took away from his name the end letters, *el* (God), and called him Satan, the source of all the evil in the world.

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## 172. THE WELL OF MIRIAM

The children of Israel, wandering in the desert, thirsted exceedingly; and when they came to a place called afterwards Beër (well), the Lord spoke unto Moses: "Gather the people together, and I will give them water," and there appeared the well named after his sister Miriam. It is said that this well was already created in the sixth day of creation but only now appeared to the children of Israel.

This well journeyed in front of the tribes of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness. It climbed the mountains with them, and with them went down into the valleys. Where Israel rested, there rested the well, opposite the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. The leaders of Israel came round it with their staves, and sang of it the song of the well:

Spring up, O Well, sing ye unto it  
The princes digged the well,  
The nobles of the people digged it,  
By the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves!

The water bubbled and rose like a pillar, and each chieftain of a tribe held his staff, made a channel to his camp and the water flowed like mighty rivers . . .

When the children of Israel came to the land of Canaan, "a good land, a land of streams of water, of founts and deeps coming forth in cleft and mount," they paid no further attention to Miriam's Well; and it disappeared and sank into the blue Sea of Galilee.

"If you wish to see it," the Sages of Israel relate, "climb the mountain which rises above Tiberias on the way to the grave of Rabbi Meir Ba'al ha-Nes and look down upon the blue waters of the Sea. On the coast you will see a sort of sieve; there Miriam's Well sank. Its waters cure all diseases. The holy ha-Ari of blessed memory, who was the chief of the Cabalists of Safed, brought his faithful pupil hither and gave him the water of this well to drink. In this way he prepared him so that he might understand the secrets of the Cabala which he imparted to him.

### 173. THE ROCK OF THE ANTS

Close by the shore of the blue Sea of Chinnereth, between Tiberias and the colony Migdal, a solitary rock rises out of the water. In former times, when the strand was broader than it is now, this rock was part of the mainland, and a nest of ants was upon it. These ants lived their peaceful lives and knew nought of evil. But one day misfortune fell on them. A great storm began to rage; the waves of Chinnereth lashed the shore, tore away the earth around the rock, and it became a tiny island. The endangered ants left there scurried and turned in all ways, but found no refuge. Moreover they had no food; and they longed desperately for the mainland which beckoned to them nearby. So they turned in prayer to the Lord of the Universe, begging Him to remember their straits and put them upon dry land.

By the shore grew long reeds which, on hearing the ants' prayers, felt pity and agreed among themselves to deliver their diligent neighbors from their peril. And the tall reeds bowed down till their heads reached the rock, and they became bridges whereon the ants passed with great joy to the mainland.

And since then the rock is called the Rock of Ants.

#### 174. THE VALLEY OF GENNESAR

Close to the colony of Migdal which is near Tiberias there stretches round the shore of the lake of Galilee, a valley known as the Valley of Gennesar (Gennesareth). In days of old, many beautiful gardens flourished in this valley (see Fig. 55).

A. "Why was it called the Valley of Gennesar?" asked the Sages of Israel. "Because Gennesar is either a contraction of the two Hebrew words: *Ganne-Osher*, the gardens of wealth, or of the words: *Ganne Sarim*, the gardens of nobles.

The valley of Gennesar belonged to the tribe of Naphtali who inherited a great part of Galilee. When Moses blessed the children of Israel, he said to Naphtali: "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, with the blessing of the Lord." This blessing, explained the Sages of Israel, is a reference to the fruitful valley of Gennesar which was in his inheritance.

The Patriarch Jacob also blessed his children before he died and he said: "Naphtali is a hind let loose."

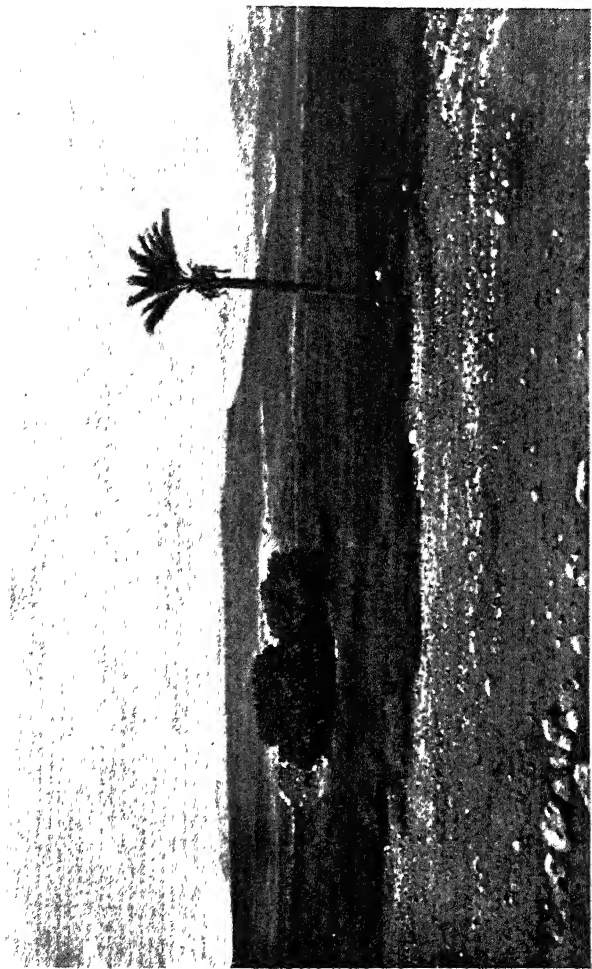


Fig. 55: The Valley of Gennesar



Why should it be Naphtali who resembles a hind and not another tribe? Because he had in his inheritance the valley of Gennesar which is the swiftest to ripen its fruits as the hind is the swiftest of animals.

B. Why do not the fruits of Gennesar grow at Jerusalem?—In order that the children of Israel who come up to Jerusalem at the annual festivals should not be able to say: "If we came up only that we might eat the fruits of Gennesar at Jerusalem, it would be sufficient for all our trouble and expense," as this would show that they did not come up for divine worship but for pleasure.

## 175. THE VALLEY OF ARBAEL

Round the colonies of Mizpah and Hittin, in the neighborhood of Tiberias, there stretches a beautiful valley surrounded by mountains (see Fig. 56). In the olden days it was the site of the ancient Jewish city of Arbael, and the ruins of its synagogue remain to this day.

A. The valley of Arbael was very rich in fields of corn and flocks. It is said that a measure of corn sown in this soil would yield a full measure of good flour, one measure of medium flour and one measure of ordinary flour. After the destruction of the Temple the valley of Arbael became sterile and desolate and one measure of corn planted in its soil did not yield even one measure of flour.



Fig. 56: The Valley of Arbael  
(In the background the North end of the Sea of Galilee, the Valley of the Jordan and the  
Mountain of Golan in Transjordania)

The story is also told of a man who was ploughing and sowing in the valley of Arbael. As he pressed his plough into the ground, a mound of burning soil was thrown up and burned the seed.

B. Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Simon were once together in the valley of Arbael and saw before them the glistening morning star, whose light shines forth and breaks into myriads of bright rays in the darkness of the night. Rabbi Hiyya said to his friend: "Do you see the dawn of the morning star? Thus shall be the redemption of Israel. In the beginning it will rise slowly, but as it proceeds it will go from strength to strength with ever increasing speed and vigor!"

C. It is told of one who was ploughing his field in the valley of Arbael, that suddenly his ox bellowed and was heard by an Arab passing by, who said: "O Jew! O Jew! Release the ox from his yoke and untie him from the plough, for the Holy Temple has been destroyed." The Jew asked, "How do you know this?" and the Arab answered: "I know it from the bellowing of the ox." In the meantime the ox bellowed a second time, whereupon the Arab said: "O Jew, O Jew! Put the yoke back upon your ox and tie him to the plough, for the Messiah has been born and the redeemer of Israel has come." And the Jew asked him: "What is his name?" And the Arab answered: "Menahem," the Consoler. "And where does he dwell?" asked the Jew again. "In Kiriath-arba, which is nigh unto Bethlehem of Judea," answered the Arab.

D. Menahem ben Amiel, The Messiah, will come suddenly in the month of Nisan on the fourteenth day of the month. He will come and he will stand in the valley of Arbael and to him will gather all the sages of Israel who still remain. And Elijah the prophet will be with him and they will proceed together to Jerusalem.

Eliezer ha-Kalir, the poet of Kiriath-sepher, sings: .

“The Messiah, Menahem ben Amiel  
Will arise in the valley of Arbael,  
He will come in the month of Spring  
In Nisan when the birds do sing,  
Clad in Retribution’s somber dress  
Mankind in goodness to bless.”

## 176. THE RIVER JORDAN

A. The waters of Jordan flow downhill in their course through all the Land of Israel. Thus the Jordan was so called from the Hebrew word *yarad*, to descend. But the Sages of Israel said, Why was it called Jordan? Because it descends (*yarad*) from the city of Dan. Others said that the name *Yarden* (Jordan) is composed of the Hebrew words *yeor* (river), and *Dan*, the most northern town of Palestine where one of the sources of the Jordan begins.

B. It is also said that at the end of Jordan there is a big animal called Behemoth which swallows its water.

When the prophet Job disputed with God: “Answered the Lord out of the whirlwind and said . . . Behold now Behemoth, which I made with thee: he eateth

grass as an ox . . . He moveth his tail like a cedar . . . His bones are as strong pieces of brass, his bones are like bars of iron . . . Surely the mountains bring him forth food . . . He lieth under the shady trees in the covert of the reed and fens . . . Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not, he trusteth that he *can draw up Jordan into his mouth.*"

The Sages of Israel add the following: "The Jordan flows from the caves of Panias, passes into the sea of Sibki (Hula), and into the Sea of Tiberias. The water of the Jordan does not mingle with the waters of the lake of Tiberias. From here the water winds and falls into the Dead Sea, and then winds and descends until it arrives at the mouth of the Behemoth."

The Almighty, blessed be He, said to His righteous men: I created one creature for your food in the coming world, that is the Behemoth, and she crunches one thousand mountains, and a thousand mountains prepare for her various grasses and vegetables for food. And from whence does she drink? Her head lies opposite the Jordan and her mouth is open and the waters of Jordan pour into it and so she drinks. All the waters that the Jordan receives for six months, the Behemoth swallows in one sip.\*

\* The disappearance of the Jordan into the Dead Sea which has no exit to any other sea, was a wonder to some travelers. The English traveler Timberlake in 1601 C. E. writes: "The river Jordane runneth into this Lake (Dead Sea), and there dieth, which is one of the greatest secrets (in my minde) in the world, that a fresh water should runne continually into this saide Lake . . . hath no further issue that hath bene seene by any man."

## 177. THE CAVE OF PANIAS

At the foot of Mount Hermon is hidden the village of Banias, which is now on the borders of Syria. This is the site of the old city of Panias, which is so called because the Temple of Pan once stood here. Pan was a Greek god with the horns, legs and ears of a goat. His chief concern was with flocks, herds and pastures. He made the first shepherd's pipe from reeds and introduced it to men. The city of Panias was also called Caesarea-Philippi and was the capital of Philip, the son of king Herod. The many remains which are scattered around recall the splendor of this place in bygone days.

Close to the village of Banias, on the top of a steep mountain, there is a fortress called by the Arabs *Kala'at Namrud*, the fortress of Nimrod, the mighty hunter and builder of great cities after the creation of the world.

A. Near the village Banias, amid trees and shrubs, there is a cave (see Fig. 57), and under its debris flows a fountain, one of the three main springs of the Jordan (see Fig. 58). The ancients believed that the cave of Panias continued deep into the mountains and created a tunnel which is called in Hebrew: *Mehilah de-Kisrion*, the tunnel of Caesarea (Philippi). It is told that when God refused to allow Moses to enter the land of Canaan, Moses asked to be allowed to enter it through the tunnel of *Kisrion*.



Fig. 57: The Cave of Panias



Fig. 58: The Water of Panias

B. It was believed that this tunnel continues and is connected with the bottom of the small lake Ram, which is at a distance of two hours toward the east. This was called by the Greeks *Phiala*, the bowl, because of the roundness of its circumference (see Fig. 59). The waters of the lake of Ram flow through the tunnel, issuing forth from the cave of Panias to join the river Jordan. The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus writes: "Panium is thought to be the fountain of Jordan, but in reality it is carried thither in an occult manner from the place called Phiala. Its waters continue always up to its edges, without either sinking or running



over. The origin of the Jordan was formerly unknown, but was discovered by Philip, when tetrach of the land of the Trachonites. He had chaff thrown into Phiala, and it was found at Panium, whither it had been carried by the water through the tunnel."

Once pupils came to Rabbi Jose, the son of Kisma, and asked him when the Messiah, the son of David, would come and what would be the sign of his coming . . . Rabbi Jose answered: "When the waters of the cave of Panias will turn to blood!"

## 178. THE LAKE OF RAM

Amid the foothills of Hermon, there is found an oval pool in the crater of an extinct volcano. It is called by the Arabs: *Birkat Ram*, The pool of the height (Fig. 59). That is the Phiala of the Greeks (see Legend 177B).

In ancient times there was a rich and flourishing village at that place; but the villagers were very stingy and bad-natured. They would not give food to the hungry, nor water to those who thirsted. One day a very holy man entered the village; and he could find no place to rest and refresh himself. All doors were barred against him and no one offered him food or drink, so all that night he stayed without food in the street.

When he went forth on the morrow, he turned to the village and cursed it, saying "Ya Allah! May it sink

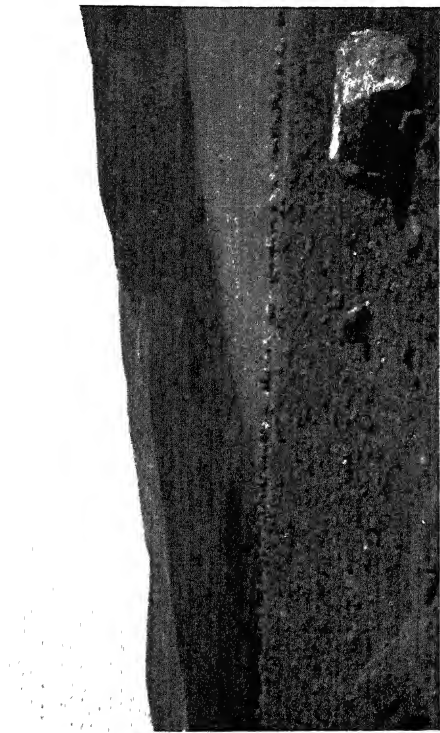


Fig. 59: The Lake of Ram

into the ground and be as the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah!" And the ground opened immediately and swallowed the village with all who dwelt there. And on its site is the blue Pool of Ram.

### 179. THE HILL OF THE JUDGE

In ancient times there was no Jordan in the land, but there were three streams, all flowing from the foot of mount Hermon in various directions. Once a quarrel broke out between them as to which was the largest and most important.

The quarrel went on until at length the rivers invited the Lord of the Universe to descend and judge between them. The Lord of the Universe descended to earth and seated Himself on a small hill to judge the matter. But He could not settle their dispute, so at length he said, "Rivers! Ye are dear to Me, all three. Hearken to My counsel. Unite all three and together ye will indeed be the biggest river."

So the three streams joined together and the Jordan was formed from them. And the mound whereon the Lord of the Universe was seated to judge is known in Arabic as *Tell al-Kadi*, the hill of the Judge, to this day (see Fig. 60).



Fig. 60: The Hill of the Judge and the Sources of the Jordan

## 180. THE BRIDGE OF THE DAUGHTERS

On the road going up from Tiberias to Safed, and before one reaches the colony Rosh-Pinah, there is a pit called by the Arabs, *ḡib Yussef*, Joseph's Pit. They say that Joseph, Jacob's son, was cast into it and that it was in this district that Jacob's sons tended their flocks. "And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him. And they took him and cast him into a pit; and the pit was empty, there was no water in it."

When the sons of Jacob sold their brother Joseph to the Ishmaelite caravan, the daughters of Jacob, coming from the east, were crossing the Jordan by the bridge now known as *ḡisr Banāt Ya'aqub*, the Bridge of Jacob's Daughters, which is near the colony Mishmar ha-Yarden. While they were on the bridge, the tidings reached them that Joseph had been mauled by a wild beast. The maidens began to stray to and fro, and wandered amid hills and dales, seeking for traces of their unfortunate brother. They wept and wailed, and hot tears welled from their eyes. These tears were changed to black stone, and are the blocks of basalt scattered through the hills and dales of Galilee.

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## 181. THE BRIDGE OF MEETINGS

The Tribe of Beni Sakher came from the edge of the desert and encamped south of the Sea of Galilee, beyond Jordan. Now the Beni Sakher had renowned warriors in their midst, and their maidens are famed for grace and beauty. Most famous was Halima, daughter of the Amir of the tribe. And tidings of her loveliness came to all the tribes who dwell in Kedar.

So a certain Amir of the tribes of Beer-sheba went seeking for Halima; and he wandered through the ways of the land asking for the camping place of the Beni Sakher, till he came to a bridge built over the Jordan. From this bridge paths and tracks led in all directions, and the Amir did not know whither to turn. So he sat on the bridge awaiting a wayfarer whom he might ask.

He had but seated himself when he saw another Amir from Gilead; he too sought the tribe of Halima and did not know which way to go; and he too sat awaiting his lot. In a few minutes came a third Amir and a fourth and a fifth, all seeking the camp of the Beni Sakher to ask for the hand of Halima; and none of them knew whither to turn, so they sat down to wait.

When they began to speak to each other, they found that they who had met on the Jordan bridge all sought the same goal. Since then this bridge is called *Jisr al-Majama*, the Bridge of Meetings, in memory of those Bedouin Amirs who went to woo Halima, most beautiful of the daughters of Arabia (see Fig. 61).



Fig. 61: The Bridge of Meetings

XXII. SAFED AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

SAFED IS THE JEWEL OF GALILEE  
SAFED IS THE NEST OF MYSTICISM.





## 182. THE PRAISE OF SAFED

A. The city of Safed, the capital of Upper Galilee, was not known in biblical times. In the days of the second Temple and afterwards, when Galilee had a dense Jewish population, the Mount Safed used to be the place for bonfires (*massuot*). These bonfires were lit on the high mountains to announce the first days of the new month and the holy days. The summit of Mount Safed was suitable for this purpose and it may be for this reason that it was called in Hebrew Zephath, from the word *zafah*, to watch. The Rabbis say that the name *ZePhaT* is composed of the initials of the three Hebrew words *zebi*, beauty (deer), *peër*, glory and *tiferet*, splendor.

In the sixteenth century Safed was a great center of Jewish Cabalists. Here they studied their secret wisdom (*hokmah nisteret*). These men of mysticism found many virtues in this city, the pearl of Galilee. They said: In Safed is the purest air of the Holy Land and there is not a place where they understand better the profundities of the Holy Law than in Safed. Moreover, owing to the pure air, if a man dies here his soul flies at once straight to the cave of Machpelah, and from there to the Garden of Eden.

B. In Safed lived the great scholars of the Cabala. Here lived Rabbi Isaac Luria, who was born in Jeru-

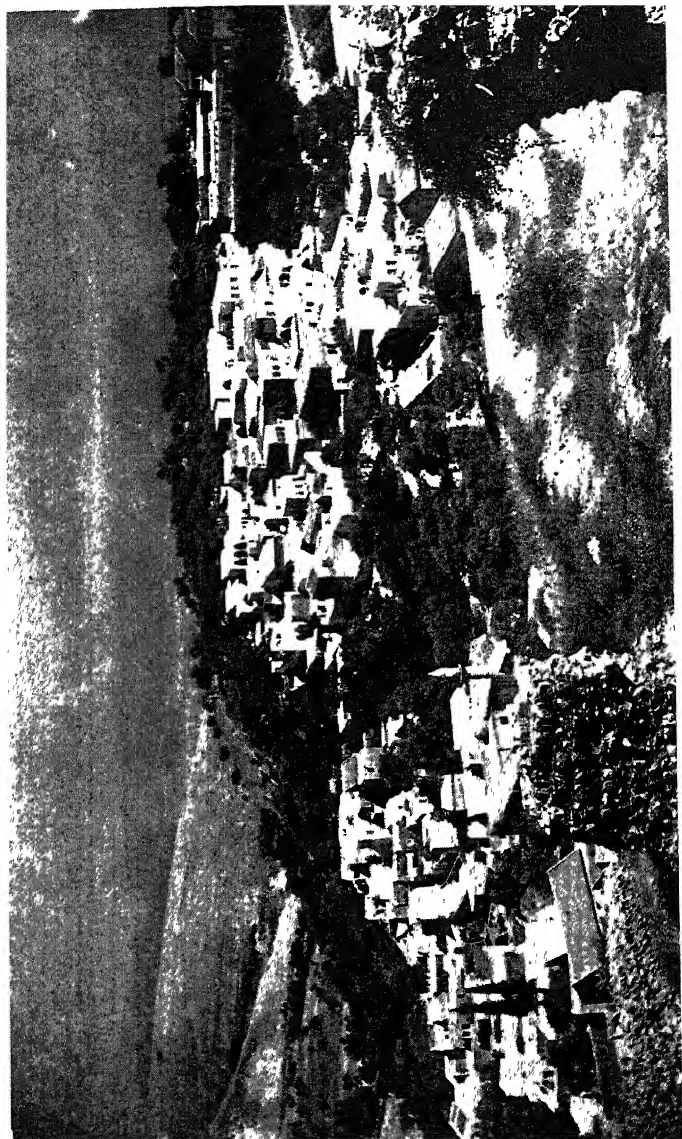


Fig. 61a: The Town of Safed

saalem (1534), and is known by the name ha-Ari, the initials of *Adonenu* (Our Master) *Rabbi Yizhak*. The word ha-Ari stands in Hebrew also for Lion and he was the Lion of his community. He had many disciples and pupils who were called *Gure ha-Ari*, the young lions or lion-whelps.

Ha-Ari claimed to have constant interviews with the prophet Elijah, who communicated to him sublime doctrines. He was convinced that he was the Messiah, the son of Joseph, the forerunner of the great Messiah. He visited the sepulchers of ancient teachers and there, by prostrations and prayers, obtained from their spirits all manner of revelations. He saw spirits everywhere, he saw how the souls were set free from the body at death, how they hovered in the air or rose out of their graves.

In Safed there lived for a short time in the sixteenth century Solomon Molcho, who also declared himself as the forerunner of the Messiah. It is said that even after his death he would pay visits to his fiancée in Safed on every Friday evening, reading in her presence the Sanctification (*Kiddush*) over the cup of wine with which the Sabbath is initiated.

C. In the Jewish cemetery of Safed, which is on a steep slope amid mountainous surroundings, are famous tombs and graves of martyrs and scholars. The holy ha-Ari said: "In Safed were buried *Kefel Kiflaim ke-Yozee Mizraim*," double twice the number of Israelites who went out from Egypt, of righteous men, martyrs and geniuses of the world!

On a steep hill lies buried the famous mother Hannah, and here also are the seven sons who were martyred by the Greeks. No stones mark their tomb, but when you climb this hill you become very tired, a sign that you are walking on these holy and hidden graves.

Not far from this hill there is the tomb of Rabbi Leib, the man of agony (*Ba'al Yesurin*). He was a great man in the learning of the Holy Law and feared God. He said before his death that each person who had troubles, God forbid! should come and pray on his tomb, and God would help him! The people of Safed still visit his tomb.

In a little cave is hidden the grave of a young child who knew deeply all the secrets of the Holy Law, and old learned scholars used to come to him and ask his advice. He could also revive the dead and prophesy. The cave is holy to the Jews who call it *Me'arat ha-Yenuka*, the cave of the child.

D. Among the houses of Safed there is a cave with tombs. The Arabs call it the Place of Mourning and they tell that here came the messenger and announced to Jacob the death of his son Joseph.

The Jews call this cave: *Bet ha-Midrash shel Shem ve-'Eber*, the house of study of Shem (the son of Noah) and (his great grandson) Eber. Rabbi Nehemiah tells that Jacob the Patriarch transmitted to Joseph his son all the learning that he had acquired in the school of Shem and Eber.

## 183. THE EARTHQUAKE AT SAFED

In the month of January of the year 1837 there was a great earthquake in Galilee which destroyed the city of Safed. More than 4000 people were killed beneath its ruins. Many scholars of Israel were found dead, with their faces lying on the holy books. It was said that since the day when the Temple was destroyed there had not been a greater destruction in the country than that at Safed. It was believed that the days of the Messiah were at hand, because the Sages of Israel said that with the destruction of Galilee the Messiah would appear!

A. Some nights before the earthquake, a man dreamed a dream. He saw an old man who came crying bitterly, tearing his hair and trembling violently. He said: "A decree has been issued against your congregation. See that they make atonement for their sins and fast and pray. Perhaps God will forgive them." The man who dreamt this, rose early in the morning and rushing to the synagogue, mounted the pulpit and related his dream. The people heard it with great fear and decreed a day of fasting. They prayed all day with great fervor and weeping and made it as the Day of Atonement. But because of their sins God forgave them not and the earthquake came upon them . . .

B. When the Jews heard of the great disaster which came on Safed, they mourned the dead and sent consolations to the people who escaped. One rabbi

wrote a long poem according to the letters of the Hebrew name *Zefat* (Safed):<sup>1</sup>

*Zefat Pitom Teharebi*, Safed suddenly will be destroyed.

*Zefat Pitom Tibbale'i*, Safed suddenly will be engulfed.

*Zefat Pitom Tibbaneh*, Safed suddenly will be built.

*Zefat Pitom Tikkonen*, Safed suddenly will be restored!

#### 184. THE SYNAGOGUE OF HA-ARI

In the Jewish quarter of Safed, in a corner of a narrow lane, there stands the synagogue of ha-Ari (No. 182). Over the door, are engraved these words: "How ineffably sacred is this spot, the synagogue of the great master, ha-Ari, blessed be his name."

A. Once upon the holy Sabbath, ha-Ari said to his disciples, "If you will undertake not to speak in the synagogue from the early morning service till after the 'blessing of the moon' and not a smile will cross the lips of any one of you at what you behold, I myself shall conduct the service for you before the ark and shall call up to the reading of the Law the seven holy shepherds of Israel." And the disciples answered, "We gladly undertake to do all that you command us." Ha-Ari first called upon Aaron, the high priest, who appeared and read the first portion (*Kohen*), intoning the blessing at the beginning and the end.

<sup>1</sup> In Hebrew the name of the city has three letters only, ZFT, the consonants alone being written. F and P are the same letter in Hebrew, differing only in respect of a dot inside the letter, which changes F into P.

Next came Moses, who read the second portion (*Levi*), and after making the blessings he disappeared. Then followed the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Joseph the pious one was called for the sixth portion, and for the seventh, ha-Ari called David the son of Jesse, King of Israel. The latter appeared, dancing with joy and glee before the ark of the Lord, and he was clad in a white robe of linen, and a girdle was round him.

And now the synagogue is holy to the Jews of Safed, who every Friday evening come here to welcome the holy Sabbath, "as a bridegroom welcometh his bride."

B. One Friday evening, surrounded by his disciples and clad in fair white garments, ha-Ari came to the synagogue to welcome the Sabbath. He wore a fourfold garment to signify the four letters of the Ineffable Name YHVH. In the midst of their singing and chanting ha-Ari said to his disciples, "My friends, is it your wish that we journey to Jerusalem before the Sabbath in order to spend the Sabbath there?" Some of the disciples answered, "Yes, that is what we wish," and others said, "We will first go to our womenfolk and let them know." No sooner were these words uttered, than ha-Ari shook with fear and, striking his palms one against the other, he said, "Woe unto us, we are not worthy of Israel's salvation. If you had answered, 'Yes, we will gladly go with you,' all Israel would have been redeemed."



## 185. THE SYNAGOGUE OF ABOAB

When the great earthquake of Safed (No. 183) ceased and those who had fled from the city returned, they tore their clothes and wept bitterly because of the destruction. When they began to pick their way among the ruins, they found that in the complete desolation there was left only one whole wall. When they approached, they found that of the Aboab synagogue the southern wall alone was left standing with its sacred ark intact.

Then they understood that only through the merit of the ancient scroll of the Law in the ark was the wall preserved, for this scroll of the Law is holy and is said to have belonged to the sage and erudite scholar Isaac Aboab, who wrote the book *Menorat ha-Maor*, the Lamp of the Light. So the synagogue was at once built anew and is still used for prayer.

## 186. THE SYNAGOGUE OF HA-BANNAI

In the city of Safed, in the quarter of the Sephardic Jews, is the synagogue of Rabbi Joseph ha-Bannai, the builder. Near the entrance hall of this synagogue there is a gloomy room in which is the gravestone of the saint. Once he was asked, "How was land first created?" He answered, "The Holy One, blessed be He, took dust from beneath the Throne of Glory and cast it into the water; and it became land. And the pebbles became hills and mountains."

Beside the place of his burial is a small courtyard in which grows a fig tree.

Once Rabbi Joseph hired laborers for his field. He was delayed and did not bring their food at the proper time; so they said to his son, "We are hungry!" They were sitting under the fig tree at the time, and the young man said, "Fig tree! Fig tree! Bring forth your fruit that father's workmen may eat!" The tree bore its fruit and they ate. Meanwhile Rabbi Joseph came and was told what had happened. Then he said to his son, "My son, you have troubled your Maker more than was fitting in asking the fig tree to bear fruit at an unwonted season. You will be gathered in before your time."

#### 187. THE DOME OF HOSEA THE SON OF BEERI

On the day after the feast of Pentecost (*Shabuot*), it is the custom of the Jews of Safed to go to pray at the grave of Hosea the son of Beeri, the prophet. Above his resting place is a small building with a white dome (see Fig. 62), and this is its story.

It was when the Jews of Safed were under the galling yoke of their Arab townsmen. In those days they were forbidden to place domes upon their tombs, even upon the holiest ones, save upon the tomb of the prophet, Hosea ben Beeri; and for this reason.

Once two Arab scoundrels wished to bring a blood libel against the Jews. So they took a dead child and



Fig. 62: The Dome of Hosea

put it at the entrance of the small building above the prophet's grave. That night the rabbi of the town saw in a dream the prophet Hosea rising from his grave and standing at the entrance of the building. And he said to the rabbi, "Rise and come down to my tomb. Wicked Arabs have cast a dead child there to bring false charges against Israel."

The rabbi went and roused some members of the community; and when they reached the grave, they found that matters were as the rabbi had seen in his dream. So they hid the dead child elsewhere.

When the morning star rose they all went early to synagogue, as was their custom. Suddenly soldiers surrounded all the synagogues, allowing people neither to come in nor to go out, and accused them of killing the child. But when the officer went to the grave and found nothing, he released the Jews.

At midnight the prophet Hosea again appeared to the rabbi, saying, "Rise and go down to my grave. The rogues have put another corpse there and are guarding it. Have no fear, for they are smitten with blindness. Take the corpse away, leaving stones in its place. They will know nothing."

That day government officials came and found the four guards sitting on the ground holding dry stones. The ruler said, "We must inquire fully into this. It is not a small matter." He sent for the rabbi and asked to be told the whole truth, promising not to harm him in any way. Then the rabbi told him all that had occurred; and the Arabs were chained and put into prison.

"Indeed, your man of God, Hosea ben Beeri, deserves the name of prophet," said the Pasha. The same day he ordered a dome to be built there. And it is this white dome which can still be seen above the grave of Hosea ben Beeri, the prophet.

## 188. THE GRAVE OF RABBI PHINEHAS

Below the Jewish cemetery of Safed there is a heap of stones over the grave of Rabbi Phinehas son of Yair, who was well known for his great piety. Before his

death, he asked his people not to build a shrine, for he did not wish to be beholden to anyone for his work. For that reason there is only a heap of stones today over the grave of Rabbi Phinehas. The Sages of Israel say: "It is not necessary to build shrines to the memory of wise men. Their words alone immortalize them."

The grave of Rabbi Phinehas stands in the midst of a cornfield. The pagan owner of this field was wont to plough and sow it year by year, and the Jews who came to prostrate themselves on the grave used to spoil the crops. Therefore the owner decided not to allow the Jews to enter the field. From that moment the field ceased to yield its corn and thus the owner understood that the holy Phinehas had taken vengeance on him. Therefore he gave the Jews permission again to enter and approach the grave whenever they chose, and the field once more produced its abundant corn.

#### · 189. ON THE WAY TO EN ZETIM

When the holy ha-Ari first came to Safed he went to the village En Zetim, the Fountain of Olives, which is nearby to prostrate himself on the grave of Judah the son of Il'ai. As he approached the olive and fig trees that surround the grave, he saw perched on one of the trees a raven, which croaked continuously. Said ha-Ari to his friend Moses Galanti who accompanied him, "In this raven can be seen the features of a man called Sabbatai who was a tax-collector in Safed." And

Rabbi Moses answered, "I know him to be a cruel and wicked man." Ha-Ari replied, "His soul has passed into this raven, because he treated the poor with great cruelty when he collected the taxes; he took away the clothing from their bodies and the bedding from beneath them. For that reason God has punished him so that his soul now dwells in the body of this raven. Now he is asking me to pray for him." Then ha-Ari turned to the raven and said: "Wicked one, go away, do you think I would pray for you?" And the raven flew away.

#### 190. RABBI JUDAH BAR IL'AI

In the village of En Zetim is to be found the grave of Rabbi Judah the son of Il'ai, who was, in the second century, one of the best known sages of Galilee, the leader among the speakers.

A. Once the holy ha-Ari ordered his pupil Rabbi Isaac ha-Cohen to go to the grave of Rabbi Judah, and there to ask of him an explanation of one of the most difficult passages in the Zohar, the mystic book of the Cabalists. And ha-Ari forbade his pupil to speak to any man or to exchange any greeting, but to concentrate his whole mind on his mission.

Before Rabbi Isaac arrived at the grave of Rabbi Judah he met a woman on the way and greeted her. When he came to the grave he prostrated himself and acted according to the commands of ha-Ari. But the

holy sage did not make any response. So the rabbi returned to his master and said to him: "My master, I went to the grave of the holy sage and did as you commanded me, but no reply came forth from the grave." And ha-Ari replied: "Did I not behold you in a vision, speaking to an Arab woman? And it is not enough that she greeted you, but you were the first to greet her at a certain place. Did I not command you not to speak to anyone?" Then Rabbi Isaac remembered what he had done and made his confession.

B. A Jewish traveler in the year 1496 tells about the grave of Rabbi Judah Bar Il'ai: "I came there and prostrated myself on the grave and lighted candles. I spoke there with an Arab woman who fell from the almond tree which grows near the grave. This woman cursed the saint when she climbed the tree to pluck some almonds. The woman told me that she saw some boys who came and threw her from the tree to a great distance so that she broke her arms. She told me also that the saint came to her in a dream and that she then returned from her wickedness and lighted candles on the grave. Finally she was cured and got well."

## 191. THE COCKEREL SAINT

In the village of En Zetim is the grave of Rabbi Joseph Saragossi, a great and pious saint who lived at Safed in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Rabbi Saragossi gained the love not only of his own people

but also that of the Arabs of Safed, towards whom he displayed a spirit of conciliation and great tolerance. At one time Saragossi was on the point of leaving Safed, when he was prevailed upon by the inhabitants to remain, and they promised him an annual salary of fifty ducats, two-thirds of which sum was furnished by the Arab governor of the city. Once Rabbi Saragossi went to visit the tomb of Rabbi Judah bar Il'ai. When he came, there appeared to him Elijah the prophet. He bought the spot and asked his pupils to bury him there.

Once the ruler of Safed suddenly ordered the Jews to bring him five hundred pure white cockerels on pain of a severe penalty. The Jews gathered all the cocks needed but they were not all white. And the sorrowful leaders of the congregation did not know what to do. The people went to pray at the holy graves, but without avail, until they went to En Zetim, to the grave of Rabbi Joseph Saragossi. There too they prayed and wept bitterly. When they returned to the city they found that all the cocks had become white.

Ever since then Rabbi Joseph Saragossi is spoken of as *ha-Zaddik ha-Laban*, the White Saint, or *Zaddik ha-Tarnegolim*, the Cockerel Saint.





XXIII. MERON AND PEKI'TN



## 192. THE RAVINE OF MERON

In the neighborhood of Safed there is situated the village of Meron, famous for the tomb of Simon the son of Yohai who lies within its borders.

Simon lived in the second century and died on the 18th of the month of Iyyar (*Lag ba'Omer*). On the eve of *Lag ba'Omer* many thousands of Jewish pilgrims from Palestine and other countries come annually to Meron. They celebrate the night with dancing and bonfires, because according to the narrative, the world was filled with light at the death of Simon, and the revelations which he had received were then put in writing in the book which was named *Zohar*, Brightness. This pilgrimage is called: *Hillula de-Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai (deRashbi)*, the "wedding" of Rabbi Simon the son of Yohai.

The following story is told of one of the pupils of Simon, who traveled abroad and returned a wealthy man. On seeing him the other pupils envied his good fortune and begged that they also might go abroad.

Rabbi Simon bar Yohai hearing this, led his pupils to a ravine near Meron and said: "O ravine! O ravine! Fill thyself with pieces of gold." And lo and behold! There came from heaven a shower of golden coins, which spread themselves before the eyes of his pupils. Turning to them he said: "If it is gold you seek, here



Fig. 62a: Jews in the Pilgrimage of R. Simon bar Yohai

it is in the ravine at your feet, but remember he who takes this gold now, yields his share of the world to come, for there is no reward in the Torah save in the world to come." And not one of the pupils took any piece of gold from the ravine.

### 193. THE GRAVE OF RABBI SIMON

Above the grave of R. Simon bar Yohai, in the village of Meron, stands an imposing building with a large dome on the top. Inside there is a synagogue and round it small rooms for the pilgrims. The Jewish traveler Joseph Sofer (in 1762) related the following: The building is closed day and night and the keys of the door are in the hands of the keeper of Safed. Whoever desires to visit the grave, goes to the keeper and offers him a gift, and the keeper goes with him and opens the door. There the visitor makes his supplications, after which the keeper closes the door and they return.

In Meron there are only a few Jews, most of the inhabitants being Arabs. When the great earthquake shook the country, all the Arabs of Meron came to the building with the dome, and found the door closed. Then all the Arabs cried in a loud voice, "Rabbi Simon, Rabbi Simon, you are a great man and of high degree. We have heard of your greatness from the lips of our forefathers, and you are also great in our eyes. Pray, open the door!" Immediately the door flew open.

A few months later a second earthquake occurred, and Jews and Arabs both went up to the building just as on the previous occasion. When they came near the building, they all saw it jumping up and down in the air, and to their great consternation the dome was split into two parts. When they saw this a great fear overcame them and, trembling with terror, they shouted, "Rabbi Simon! Rabbi Simon! If your own building has been split asunder, what will be the end of us?" After a half hour the earth became still and the building returned to its place, while the dome which had been split asunder was joined together once again and stood as before.

The people who witnessed the miracle came to the place and searched both within and without for any crack or other sign of the disturbance, but none was to be seen.

#### 194. THE GRAVE OF RABBI ELIEZER

In the village of Meron in the hall in which is the grave of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai, there is a monument which marks the grave of his son Rabbi Eliezer (see Fig. 63). This is most remarkable, for Rabbi Eliezer was buried at the village of Gush Halab which is near by.

The explanation is as follows. Rabbi Simon repeatedly appeared in dreams to the men of Meron and said to them, "I have only one right eye. Why do you not bring it to me?" The men of Meron understood

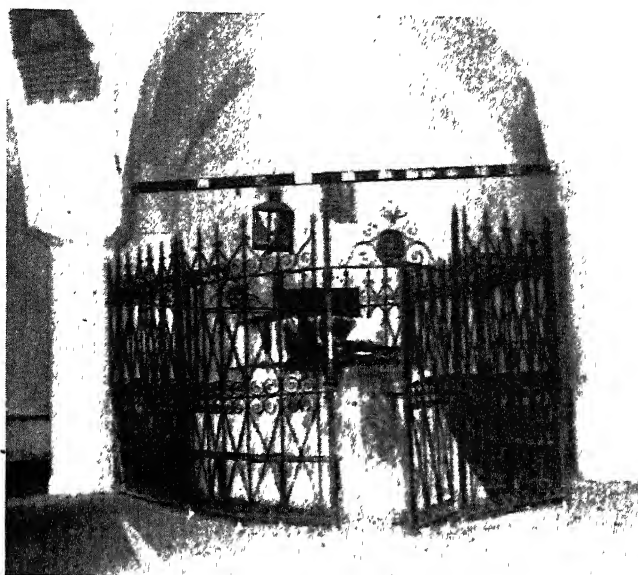


Fig. 63: The Grave of Rabbi Eliezer

that this referred to his only son Rabbi Eliezer. So they went to Gush Halab to take him thence and bury him anew near his father's tomb. But the men of Gush Halab drove them out, for they wished the saint to rest in their city. But once, on the eve of the Day of Atonement, when the men of Gush Halab were busied with preparations, the men of Meron succeeded in stealing the body of Rabbi Eliezer; and they buried him next to his father.

After that Rabbi Simon ceased to disturb the sleep of the men of Meron.



## 195. THE CAVE OF HILLEL THE ELDER

In the village of Meron there is a cave called by the Jews *Me'arat Hillel ha-Zaken*, the cave of Hillel the elder. Hillel lived in Jerusalem in the time of King Herod. He was a famous scholar of the Law and founder of the school called after him. One day while he and the sages were assembled at Jericho, a heavenly voice exclaimed: "Among those here present is one man upon whom the Holy Spirit would rest if his generation were worthy of it." All eyes were thereupon fixed on Hillel.

A. It is said that in the cave of Meron are buried Hillel and his faithful pupils and at the entrance, outside the cave, lie two beadles.

The Jewish traveler Rabbi Pethahiah, who visited Palestine in the year 1187, writes about the cave of Hillel:

"In the middle of the cave there is a large stone, hollow like a cup, which is capable of containing more than forty measures (*seah*) of water. When men of worth enter the cave, the stone appears full of sweet water. One may then wash one's hands and pray, imploring God for what one desires. The stone, however, is not hollow beneath, for the water does not come from the bottom, as it only appears in honor of a man of worth, and when an unworthy man comes, the water does not appear. Though one should draw from the stone a thousand jugs of water, it would not be diminished, but would remain full as before."

B. Rabbi Samuel the son of Samson, who came to Palestine in 1210, writes: "From Safed we went to the village of Meron . . . At the foot of the mountain we found the grave of Hillel and we prayed there . . . Near one of the graves there is a trough full of water . . . Though we poured much water from the trough, it in no way diminished. The water is as sweet as honey and that is a great miracle."

Another traveler, Rabbi Jacob, who came to Palestine in 1228, relates that the Jews come to pray and to chant in the cave of Hillel; when they find water in the cave they rejoice greatly, for this is a sign of a fruitful year. Often they do not find water at first, but it appears suddenly while they are praying . . .

## 196. RABBI JOHANAN HA-SANDLAR

In the village of Meron is the grave of Rabbi Johanan ha-Sandlar, the shoemaker (see Fig. 64). His famous saying is: "Every assembly which is in the name of Heaven will in the end be established, but that which is not in the name of Heaven will not in the end be established." Close by the grave there is a small cave in which it is said that Rabbi Johanan tanned the hides and made his shoes and sandals.

Once an Arab from the village of Meron left his flock in the cave of Rabbi Johanan, and a small boy was put in charge of them. When the Arab returned to his flock, the boy was nowhere to be found. When he finally



Fig. 64: The Grave of R. Johanan

returned, his master began to scold and abuse him and the boy answered: "Why are you afraid? Did I not leave the sheep under the protection of a holy man, Rabbi Johanan?" Then the Arab began to beat the boy and to curse the name of the holy man. At once the rabbi punished him by deforming his face, twisting his neck and making him dumb, so that he could not open his mouth. And the boy ran to the home of the Arab and related to the family what had befallen his master. Only after they had offered up sacrifices and uttered many prayers to Rabbi Johanan, was the holy sage

appeased. He then cured the Arab of his affliction so that he became as before. From that time onwards the Arab made a vow that he would kindle a lamp of oil on the grave of the holy man.

### 197. THE LINTEL AND THE MESSIAH

In Meron are found the ruins of an ancient synagogue, said to be that of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai. It is still possible to recognize the plan of the building; and its main entrance still stands (see Fig. 65). The gateway



Fig. 65: The Lintel of the Synagogue

is made of huge single stones and its upper lintel is made of one stone. This lintel is cracked and a part of it may fall at any time. It is said that when this fragment falls, it will be a sign of the coming of the Messiah.

A Jewish traveler relates: "I saw the synagogue of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai (may mention of a saint bring blessing); it is a great building of great stones, but now it lies in ruins, only one wall standing. The men of Safed say there is a tradition that when this wall falls, the Messiah will come, may it be speedily in our days, Amen. I was told that in the year of the expulsion from Spain, part of the wall fell . . . and the men of Safed made a festival . . ."

On the height, beyond the ravine of Meron, rises a rock to a height of over sixteen feet (see Fig. 66). The Jews call it *Kisé Eliyahu*, the Throne of Elijah, or *Kisé ha-Mashiah*, the throne of the Messiah. And they say when Elijah the prophet will come at the end of days, he will first sit on this very rock to blow the great blast which will proclaim the coming of the Messiah and the freeing and deliverance of all Israel.



Fig. 66: The Throne of the Messiah

## 198. THE MARTYR OF PEKI'IN

In the village of Peki'in (Al-Bkeia), nestling amidst the mountains of Upper Galilee, to the west of Safed, lies hidden the grave of Rabbi Jose of Peki'in. When the death of this great sage became known, Rabbi Eleazar came to his people and said, "My friends, let us go and pay our last tribute to Rabbi Jose of Peki'in who has passed out of this world and whose

life was as full of good deeds as a pomegranate is of seeds."

The grave of Rabbi Jose is situated in an enclosed cave pierced only by a tiny hole, and no man knew the size of the cave.

Once a terrible rainstorm flooded the fields and gardens, filling the rivers and valleys, to the great danger of the inhabitants. The men of Peki'in went to the tomb of Rabbi Jose, prostrated themselves and prayed that the rains might cease. When the men were gathered round the grave, one of them took a long stick and pushed it through the hole in order to find out the dimensions of the cave. After the prayer in the evening, they all returned home.

During the night the man who tried to measure the cave of Rabbi Jose had a dream, in which he saw the rabbi saying to him, "Why did you disturb my rest and thrust your stick into my body as I stood in holy prayer before the Lord, when it is forbidden to speak?"

The next morning the man went to the grave of Rabbi Jose, washed it anew and kindled a lamp of oil as an atonement for his sin.

### 199. THE SAINT OF THE MILLS

The grave of Rabbi Jose in the village of Peki'in is also holy to the Arabs who call him: *Zaddik al-Tawahin*, the saint of the mills.

Years ago there lived in Peki'in a poor unfortunate whose only asset was a huge family. None of his

ventures prospered and he and his children lived very hungry lives.

Once an old man passed through Peki'in and the Jew told him his troubles and asked his counsel. The old man laughed and said, "You have the grave of Rabbi Jose here. Why don't you reap benefit from his great merits? Go and start some work near his grave and you will find your labors blessed."

Acting on the old man's counsel, the Jew began to build a mill near the grave and to direct the water from the village spring towards his mill. That night Rabbi Jose appeared to him and asked him to stop building, so that he should not disturb his rest. The old man rose in the morning much disturbed, but went on working, for he put his many children above the saint.

The saint appeared the second night in his dream and spoke to him anew. The poor man could not restrain himself and answered: "My family are perishing of starvation and I have no hope other than your merit; that is why I wish to build a mill near your grave."

The next day he rose to continue his work as usual; but he found that all he had built was smashed down to its foundation. On one of the heaps left, however, there was a sack of good white flour.

Then he understood that Rabbi Jose had heard his demands and wished to repay him by the sack of flour in place of the mill. After that he found a sack of flour at the same place every day and took it home; and ere long he became very wealthy.



So when you come to Peki'in now, the villagers will show you near Rabbi Jose's grave a heap of stones. This is the destroyed mill.

And since this time Rabbi Jose has been called: *Zaddik al-Tawahin*, the saint of the mills.

## 200. THE MILLER OF PEKI'IN

There was a Jew living in Peki'in who used to grind corn in a water-mill some distance away from the village. Every day he would bring on his ass a sack of flour, which he sold to the people of the village, and in this way he maintained himself.

One day, at the time of the evening prayer, he passed by the cave of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai which is in Peki'in, driving in front of him his ass, laden with the sack of flour. Suddenly an old man appeared from amongst the trees and said, "Come with me to this cave and pray with me, for we have already nine men and only require one to complete the *minyan*." The miller answered, "How can I leave the ass by himself? He may be stolen from me." And the old man said to him, "Fear not, I will guard your ass for you and will be answerable for him to you."

The miller went with the stranger and saw nine old men with beards as white as the brightest silver. They prayed together and then said to the miller, "Take heed that you do not speak of this to any man, for then you will surely die." He took his ass which

was waiting for him and returned to his home in Peki'in. As he emptied his sack of flour, behold, the blessing of the Lord was upon it and the flour filled the whole room.

This happened every day and the miller grew exceedingly rich in a short time. When his neighbors saw this, they asked, "Is Saul also amongst the prophets?", and they demanded to know how he came by his wealth. He answered: "I have taken an oath upon my life not to speak of this matter; and if I break that oath, I shall surely die." But they said to him, "You fool, nothing can injure you." Finally they prevailed upon him, but before he began to tell them all that had happened in the cave of Simon bar Yohai, he made his will, leaving all his possessions to his children, and when the story was ended he passed out of this life to enter the world to come.

## 201. THE CAVE OF SIMON BAR YOHAI

In the village of Peki'in one can dimly discern a narrow cave, almost completely lost amongst a thick growth of trees. In this cave dwelt Rabbi Simon bar Yohai and his son Rabbi Eliezer.

Once Rabbi Simon bar Yohai and other scholars were disputing over the matter of Roman rule in Palestine. Rabbi Simon said, "Whatever improvements the Romans have made, they have made for their own benefit only, to facilitate the carrying out of their wicked designs. They have made baths to cleanse their own

bodies; they have built bridges in order to take their own toll; and they have made markets for the purchase of slaves." When this became known to the authorities, the Roman governor sentenced Simon to death. Rabbi Simon and Rabbi Eliezer his son fled to the cave.

Miraculously there appeared a carob tree and a spring of fresh water; so they cast off their clothing, embedded themselves in the sand up to their necks, and studied Torah all day long.

In this manner they lived in the cave for twelve years. One day, seeing that a bird had repeatedly escaped the net set for it by a hunter, Simon and his son were encouraged to leave the cavern, taking the escape of the bird as an omen that God would not forsake them. When they stood outside the cavern, Elijah the prophet came to them and said, "Who can inform Simon bar Yohai that Caesar is dead, that his decree is null and that they are free?"

In the great pilgrimage to the tomb of Rabbi Simon they sing:

The story will never die  
Of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai.  
From the day of his birth,  
Blessed is his name on Earth,  
The bright shining star of Galilee.

In a Cave he lay hidden,  
By Roman Law forbidden  
Our Rabbi bar Yohai.  
In the Torah he found his guide,  
With Spring and Carob Tree by his side,  
Our Rabbi bar Yohai.

## XXIV. GALILEE AND HER TOWNS



## 202. GALILEE AND ITS INHABITANTS

A. The northern part of Palestine was called by the Hebrews *Gelil ha-Goyim*, The District of the Heathens, and later shortly *ha-Galil*, The District. It was praised for the fertility of its fields and vineyards and especially for its olive groves. The Sages of Israel said: "It is easier to raise a legion of olive trees in Galilee than one child in Palestine." The land produced rich wines and it is said that the inhabitants drank more wine than water. The Galileans were more solicitous of their honor than of their property. They did not learn the traditional dogmas and it is said that the Law did not prosper in their hands. Rabbi Johanan, who lived eighteen years in Galilee and saw the religious indifference of its inhabitants, exclaimed: "O Galilee, O Galilee, thou hatest the Torah, hence wilt thou fall into the hands of the robbers!"

B. The faulty Hebrew pronunciation of the Galileans was well known to the ancients. They compounded guttural sounds and made no distinction between *a* and *h* or the letters *alef* and *ayin*. For that reason no man from Galilee was permitted to read the service in the synagogue.

The story is told of a man from Galilee who came to the market, shouting: "Who wants to buy a sheep?"—in Aramaic, *Imar*. But the people could not under-

stand him because he mispronounced his letters, and they said to him: "O foolish Galilean, tell us, what are you selling, *Ḥamar* to drink (=wine), or *Ḥamar* to ride on (=donkey), or '*Amar* to dress (=wool), or '*Imar* to slaughter (=sheep) . . . ?"

The man of Galilee answered: '*Imar* to slaughter. And only then the people understood what the Galilean wanted to sell.

C. According to the Jewish tradition the Messiah will appear first in Galilee. It is said: With the destruction of Galilee and the emigration of its inhabitants the Messiah will appear.

### 203. KABUL AND ITS GRAVES

A. On the mountains of Galilee, which overlook the plain of Acco, is to be found the village of Kabul. In former days, Kabul was in the territory of the tribe of Asher. King Solomon gave it to Hiram, King of Tyre, who helped him to build the Temple.

"Why was the village called Kabul?" Asked the Sages of Israel. "Because its inhabitants were clad (*mekubbal*, in Hebrew) in silver and gold."

It was said that there were three villages in Galilee, whose books of registry were so huge that special carts had to draw them to Jerusalem. One of these villages was Kabul. Why was it destroyed? Because of quarrels and dissensions.

B. In medieval times the supposed tombs of the

commentator Abraham ibn Ezra, the poet Judah Halevi and the philosopher Solomon ibn Gabirol were shown in Kabul.

A Jewish traveler, Rabbi Hayyim Hurwitz, writes (about 1834): "When I visited the graves of the Holy Land, I came to the village of Kabul. In the evening, as I prayed on the graves of Rabbi Ibn Ezra and Ibn Gabirol, an old Arab told me in good faith the following story:

"The cave which is near the grave of Ibn Gabirol reaches to Jerusalem. He said that it was customary to kindle a lamp of oil every evening at the mouth of this cave in honor of these holy men. Every year, however, on the eve *Tish'ah be-Ab*, the memorial day of the destruction of the Temple, it is impossible to kindle the lamp, for it goes out the moment it is lit, and if you put your ear to the mouth of the cave, you can hear a dreadful noise which makes the hair of the listeners rise. This Gentile swears on his oath that his father told him this in the name of his father, and all people agree that it is true."

## 204. THE TWO VILLAGES

Amongst the mountains of Galilee on the high road which descends from Safed to Acco, there is a little village called Faradia (see Fig. 67). Once upon a time Jews used to point out here the grave of Rabbi Nahum Ish Gamzo, Nahum the man from Gamzo, a little



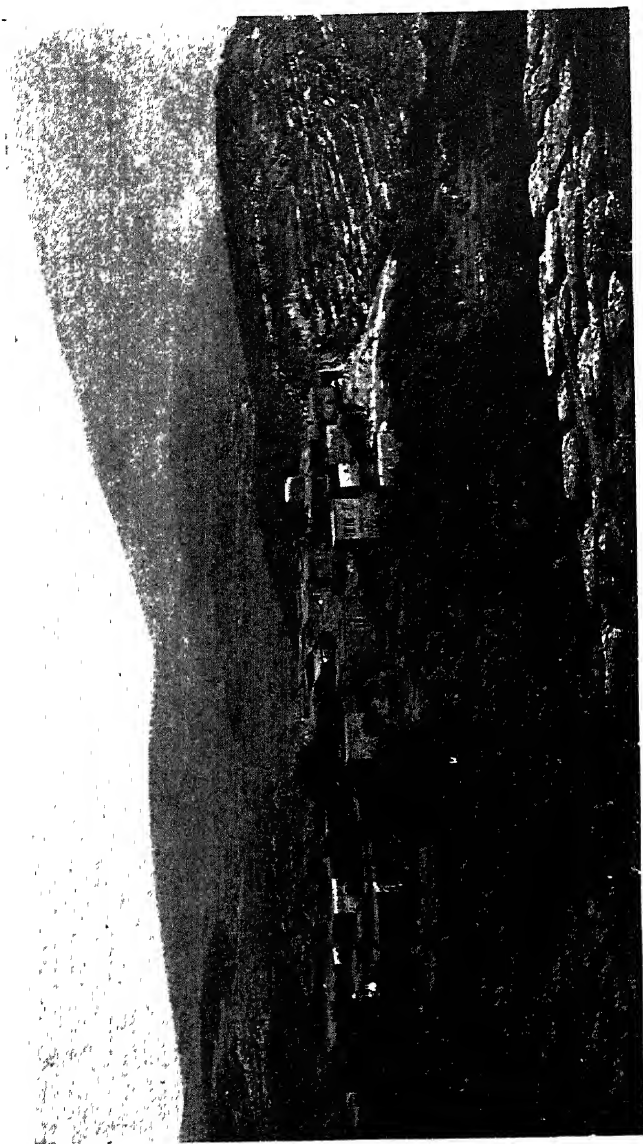


Fig. 67: The Village of Faradia

town near Ludd. The Sages of Israel said that he was given the name of Gamzo because whatever happened, good or evil, he always uttered the Hebrew words *Gam zo letobah*, this, too, will be for the best. Near the village is a pleasant spring, which once was under the guardianship of Rabbi Nahum Ish Gamzo.

There is below Faradia another village called Kefar Anan. In former days it was called Kefar Hananiah, and was famous for its pottery. In Palestine they used to say: "It is like carrying pottery to Kefar Hananiah," just as in England they speak of bringing coals to Newcastle.

There is no spring in Kefar Anan, and they receive water from the neighboring village Faradia.

A Jewish traveler who visited Galilee in the year 1522 writes: In Kefar Anan there are about thirty Jewish families, most of whom are priests (*Kohanim*), and they have a synagogue. I prayed there on the grave of Rabbi Abba Halafta. About forty years ago, the inhabitants of Kefar Anan quarreled with the inhabitants of Kefar Faradia over the waters of the spring. Each village claimed the water. The inhabitants of Kefar Faradia said: "The spring is within our borders; it is clear, therefore, that the fountain is ours." The inhabitants of Kefar Anan said: "It is well known that for many generations we have had the right to use the waters of this well." In the end they went to the court of justice, where judgment was given against

the inhabitants of Kefar Anan because they possessed no title deeds.

In the night one of the Jews of Kefar Anan dreamt that he saw Rabbi Abba Halafta who said to him: "Search in my grave and you will find a casket of copper which contains title deeds, describing how I bought the spring from Rabbi Nahum Ish Gamzo . . . Take these documents and show them to the king, and you will win your case. Afterwards you will return the casket with the deeds to its place."

The inhabitants of Kefar Anan did as they were directed and won their case . . .

## 205. HONI THE CIRCLE-MAKER

In the neighborhood of Safed near the colony Rosh-Pinah there is a village called Kefar Farram, and close to this is the tomb of Rabbi Honi ha-Me'aggel, the Circle-Maker.

In times of drought Jews go there to pray for rain. It is related that Rabbi Honi was asked to pray for rain. He prayed, but no rain came; then tracing a circle on the ground and placing himself in the center, he exclaimed: "Lord of the Universe! Thy children are steadfastly looking to me, for I am before Thee as one of Thy household. I swear by Thy great name that I will not stir from this place until Thou showest mercy to Thy children!"

At this juncture raindrops began to fall. "I have not asked for such a rain as this," said he, "but for such as would fill wells, cisterns and pits." Then the rain came down in torrents . . . Because of this, the Rabbi was called Honi ha-Me'aggel, Honi the circle-maker.<sup>1</sup>

## 206. THE CITY OF REFUGE

In upper Galilee there is now a small village called Kadas. Here stood once the city of Kedesh Naphtali, well known in the days of the Bible. Kedesh was then a city of refuge for Galilee as Schechem is for Samaria and Hebron for Judea.

"The Lord also spoke unto Joshua, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: Appoint out for you cities of refuge, that the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place that he may dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall

<sup>1</sup> In mountainous regions where a bedouin shepherd is unable to keep watch over every single camel, he takes a flint or a stick and makes a circle round the camel and says the following:

The circle of Solomon son of David  
Is between us and thee (wild beast). If  
Thou breakest it, Allah will break thee!

not deliver the slayer up into his hand, because he smote his neighbour unwittingly and hated him not beforetime."

The Sages of Israel said: He who slays his neighbor unwittingly whether in the south or in the north, how is he to know where the city of refuge is situated, where he can find safety?—On the crossroads leading to these cities was written, in Hebrew: *Miklat! Miklat*, "Refuge! Refuge!"

At the end of every mile there stood a little tower with the figure of a man pointing with his hand in the direction of the city of refuge.

From the Sages of Israel we learn that a footpath was four feet wide and the high road sixteen feet, but the roads leading to the cities of refuge were thirty-two feet wide, so as to give the fugitive sufficient room to escape without stumbling in his flight.

## 207. THE COLONY AIJELETH HA-SHAHAR

Years ago some Jewish young men, gathering together, decided to set up a worker's colony near the settlement of Rosh-Pinah, in Upper Galilee. The district is a very beautiful one. On the north rises snowy Hermon, below the colony are the waters of Merom, on the east are the Mountains of the Golan heights and to the west stretch the hills of Naphtali.

The members of the colony lived many years at this spot without naming their farm (Fig. 68). They lacked

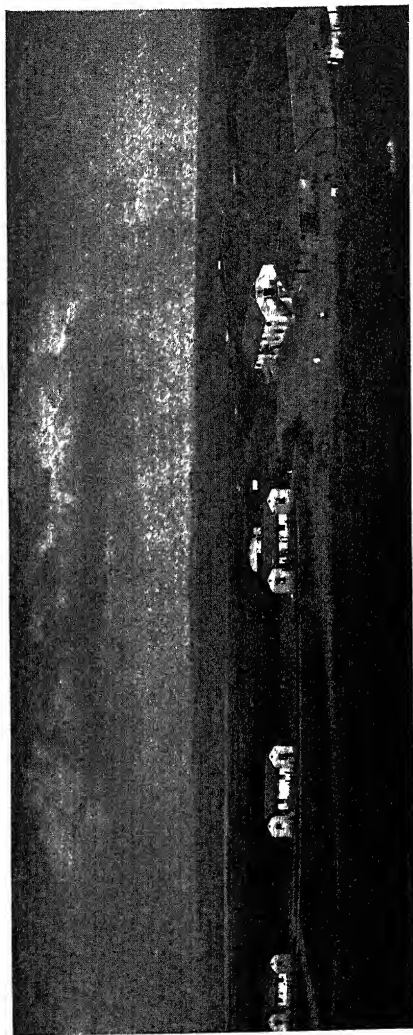


Fig. 68: The Colony of Ajeleth ha-Shahar

even a clock. And thus did they rise to their work: when the watchman saw that the morning star stood directly over the courtyard of the farm, he knew that it was time to begin the day's labor, and he went from house to house calling in Hebrew: *Haberim, Haberim, Ayyelet ha-Shahar 'alekem*, "Comrades! Comrades! The morning star shines upon you! Rise and go to work!" And every day the comrades rose to this call of the watchman.

A few years back the comrades of the settlement decided to give their farm a name. They all gathered to discuss the future name, but they could not agree and no name suggested seemed to be fitting. Then the watchman rose and said: "Comrades! It has indeed ever been our habit to rise when *Ayyelet ha-Shahar*, the morning star, rose over our farm; that is the star that rouses us to our work. Therefore, comrades, let us call this our settlement *Aijelet ha-Shahar*, Morning Star." The suggestion was adopted, and the colony has been called Aijelet ha-Shahar ever since.

## 208. THE SNOW-CAPPED HERMON

After the Lord had given the holy Law to Israel from Mount Sinai, all the other mountains appeared before the Lord with complaints and quarrelsome words, crying together, "Why didst Thou give the holy Law from Mount Sinai and not from other mountains?"

The Lord answered, "Set yourselves in an orderly row and let Me hear each mountain in turn." The

mountains tussled among themselves until they stood in order, the powerful first and the weaker last.

Mount Tabor approached first and said to the Almighty: "Why was the holy Law not given upon me? See my rounded peak. Am I not lovelier than all the mountains of the world?" And the Lord answered: "Indeed you are more beautiful; but I foresee that in days to come churches of the Gentiles will rise on your summit. I cannot give the Law to Israel from a mountain upon which there will be churches."

Tabor went forth with bowed head and Mount Gilboa drew near, saying, "Why didst Thou not give the Torah from me?" "Because I know that Saul, first of the kings of Israel, will perish upon you."

Thus did all the mountains pass before the Lord of the Universe and were turned away empty.

Last of all came a small, lowly hill, and the Lord said, "Tell Me your name." In sorrow it answered, "Hermon. Why didst Thou not give the Torah from me? At the borders of the Holy Land am I, and from my feet flow the fountains of Jordan which is so dear to Thee." And the Lord said, "Verily, it would have been fitting that the holy Law should be given from you; but since it was not, I give you another gift. I shall make you loftier than all the mountains of the land, and upon your highest portions shall eternal snows rest. And all the mountains shall envy you."

Since then Mount Hermon is the highest of the mountains of the land, and his summit is covered with an eternal cap of snow (Fig. 69).



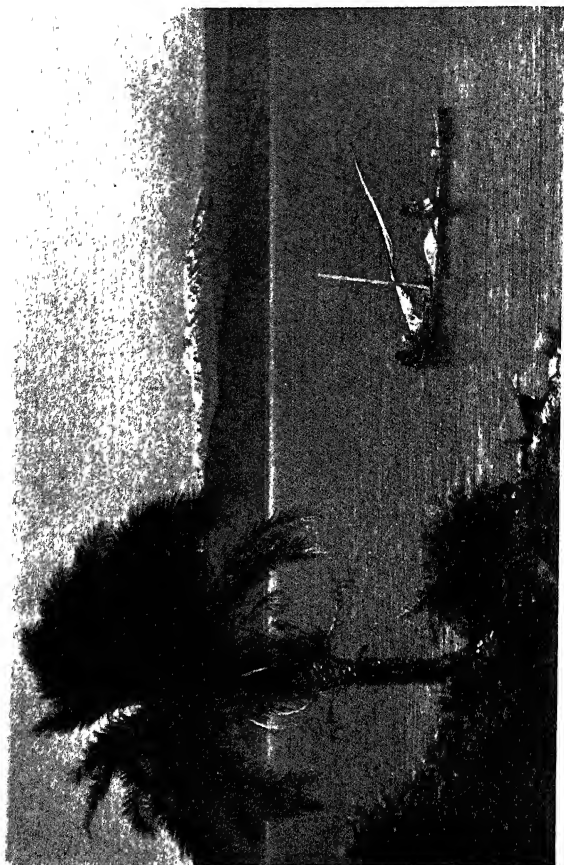


Fig. 69: Mount Hermon and the Lake of Merom

## 209. THE PLACE OF THE PROMISE

“The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward . . .’ And He brought him forth abroad, and said: ‘Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them;’ and He said unto him: ‘So shall thy seed be . . .’ And He said unto him: ‘I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.’ And he said: ‘Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?’ And He said unto him: ‘Take Me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.’ And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away . . . In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘Unto thy seed have I given this land’.”

On one of the slopes of Mount Hermon which looks down upon the Land of Israel, the place can be seen where God made this covenant with Abraham, and promised him the Holy Land.

According to Jewish pilgrims in medieval times, a beautiful building with three domes stood on the spot, which was called in Hebrew *Ma'amad Abraham Abinu*, the place of our father Abraham, or *Ma'amad ben*

*ha-Betarim*, and by the Arabs: *Masjad al-Tuyur*, The Holy Place of the Birds, in memory of the fowls that came down upon the carcasses and which Abraham drove away.

It is possible that this is the spot which is now called *Masjad Ibrahim al-Halil*, The Holy Place of Abraham, the friend of God, and is situated in a dense forest on the steep path from the village Shibaa to the village Banias, at the source of the Jordan.

XXV. IN TRANSJORDANIA



## 210. THE VILLAGE OF THE PROPHET JOB

On the plain of Bashan there is a small village called Nawa. It is said that here lived the prophet Job. There is still a fountain here which is called *Ḥammam Ayub*, the Bath of Job. Close to it there is a sanctuary: *Makam Ayub*, the holy place of Job. It is said that Job sat here when he was afflicted with disease. Now there is a stone *Ṣakhrat Ayub*, the rock of Job, which points out this spot.

In the vicinity of the village of Tabuk, on the borders of Arabia, can be seen on the roads, small, oval, black and white stones which, the people say, are the petrified worms that fell from the body of the prophet Job in his wanderings.

John Chrysostom, the patriarch of Constantinople in the fourth century, tells about "that dunghill (of Job) more to be venerated than any kingly throne. For from seeing a royal throne no advantage results to the spectators but only a temporary pleasure, which has no utility; but from the sight of Job's dunghill, one may derive the greatest benefit, yea, much divine wisdom and consolation. Therefore to this day many undertake a long pilgrimage, even across the sea, hastening from the extremities of the earth, as far as Arabia, that they may see the dunghill; and having beheld it, may kiss the land, which was the arena of such a visitor and received the blood that was more precious than all gold."

## 211. WHY IT WAS CALLED MAHANAIM

"The angels of Palestine never leave their land."

"And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them he said: This is God's host. And he called that place Mahanaim."

"Why was this place called Mahanaim, two camps?" Ask the Sages of Israel. "When Jacob went from the holy land to *Aram-naharaim* (Mesopotamia), angels accompanied him and guarded him. But when he arrived at the borders of the land, those angels disappeared and others came to accompany and to guard him till he reached *Aram-naharaim*.

When he returned, the same angels accompanied him again till he arrived at the borders of the Holy Land. So he met two camps of angels. Therefore he called this place Mahanaim, the two camps."

Mahanaim was situated near the river Jabbok, probably on the hills which are called now *Tulul al-Dhahab*, the hills of gold.

## 212. IN THE MOUNTAINS OF GEBAL

To the southeast of the Dead Sea there stretches a chain of mountains from Idumea, which is called: Gebal or Gabla. On these mountains, the Torah was offered to the children of Ishmael, who refused to take it, because of the commandments which said: "Thou shalt not kill, . . . Thou shalt not steal . . ." The

villages which were situated amongst these mountains suffered continually from the attacks of Arabs who wandered in the neighboring desert.

Rabbi Joshua the son of Levi once went to Gabla, where he noticed the clusters of grapes growing in the vineyards which were so big that they looked like calves, and he asked, "Are there calves among the vines?" To which the inhabitants replied: "These are bunches of grapes and not calves." Whereupon he exclaimed: "O Land! O Land! Shrivell thy fruit! For whom art thou producing fruit? Is it not for the Arabs, who rose against us because of our sins?"

A year later Rabbi Hiyya visited the same place and when he saw the clusters as large as goats, he said: "Are there goats among the vines?" The prompt reply was: "Away with you! And do not serve us as your friend did last year."

### 213. THE SPRING OF ZUGHAR

At the south end of the Dead Sea on the border of Edom there was in the olden days the town Zughar or Zoar where Lot escaped from the burning Sodom. In medieval times it was a small town and the Arab people sometimes called it Sakar, Hell. Makdissi mentions Zughar: "And a native of Jerusalem writing from here to his friends, once addressed his letter, 'From the lower Sakar to the Upper Paradise.' And verily this is a country that is deadly to the stranger, for its water is



execrable and he who should find that the Angel of Death delays for him, let him come here . . .”

In Zoar there was a fountain and it used to be said that when it dried up, Antichrist, who is called in Arabic *Masiḥ al-Dajal*, the false Messiah, would appear and fight his last fight.

Now Dajal dwells in one of the islands in the great ocean. The sailors say that in passing near this island, beautiful music is heard, produced on the lute, the tambourine and other instruments accompanied by dancing and the clapping of hands.

A man of the people of Tamim al-Dari, the guardians of Machpelah in Hebron, relates that he and his companions were driven to a certain island in the sea by a contrary wind, and there they found a beast called *Al-Ḥasāsah*, The Spy. This beast spies for news and carries it to the Dajal.

When the people came to the island they inquired: “Who art thou?” The beast answered: “I am she who spies.” Then they said: “Give us news.” But she replied: “If you want news, turn to this monastery, where there is a man who hath desire to see you.” So the men went to him, and he said: “Verily ye must inform me, and give me news.” And continuing, he asked: “What doeth the Lake of Tiberias?” They replied: “It leaves its borders.”

Said he again: “What doeth the Palm of Amman (the capital of Transjordan) and that of Beisan

(Beth-Shean)?” They replied: “The people thereof gather the fruits.”

Finally he asked: “What doeth the spring of Zughar?” They replied: “The people drink thereof.” Then said he: “Everything appears to take its natural course. If at least the spring of Zughar had become dried up, I would have left my resting place and spread myself over the face of the earth.”

Dajal will come from the far east, mounted on an ass and followed by his men. He will come to the Holy Land and here a great battle will be waged. Some people say that this battle will be at Jerusalem, near the Gate of Jaffa. Others assert that the event will take place near the town of Ludd. The well called *Bir al-Zibak*, the Well of Quicksilver, which is on the way to Ramleh, will be the exact spot where Dajal will be slain and all his followers will be dispersed.

## 214. PETRA AND ITS INHABITANTS

The ruins of Petra are called in Arabic: *Wadi Musa*, The valley of Moses. Not far from here there is a fountain called ‘*Ain Musa*, the spring of Moses. In the Koran it is written: “And when Moses wanted drink for his people, we said, ‘strike the rock with thy rod,’ and there gushed out twelve fountains according to the number of the tribes.” It is said that ‘*Ain Musa* near Petra is one of these fountains.

In the caves and among the ruins of Petra, there

lives at the present time a small tribe of Bedouins called al-Badul.

When Moses and the children of Israel surrounded Petra, he declared war against the inhabitants and conquered and slaughtered them all, except twelve who hid themselves in a cave on the top of the mountain, which is now called *Umm al-Biyarah*.

Moses ordered them to come down. They answered in Arabic: "*Inna abdalna, ya nabi allah!*" We have changed, O prophet of God!

"What have you changed?" Asked Moses.

"Our religion, for we accept yours," was the answer.

Since that time they are known as al-Badul, the people who became changed, or altered.

## 215. THE PALACE OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER

Amidst the ruins of Petra, there is a temple called by the Arabs, *Kaşr Bint Faron*, or *Kaşr al-Bint*, the palace of Pharaoh's daughter.

It is related that the unmarried daughter of Pharaoh, who was not allowed by her father to leave the palace, announced one day that she would marry the man who would lead the water of some spring to her dwelling.

Two young men set to work and succeeded in bringing the waters of two springs, on one and the same day, to the palace . . .

She asked the first: "How did you bring the water in such a short time?"

He answered: "With my power and the power of my men."

The second answered to the same question: "With God's power, my power and the power of my men and that of my camels." And she married the second, because he showed more faith in God.

As the princess was making her decision, the wing of a locust fell into the aqueduct made by the first man and completely stopped the flow of the water. No person could remove this impediment, although it was so tiny and insignificant.

The accident was a divine proof that she had made the right choice.

## 216. THE CAVE OF RAKIM

The Moslem geographer Makdissi (985) relates the following story: "In the village of Rakim, which lies about a league distant from Amman (now the capital of Transjordan) on the border of the desert, there is a cave with two entrances, one large and one small.

"Three men were once walking together, when a heavy rain overtook them and drove them into the cave. Suddenly there fell from the mountain above a rock which blocked up the mouth of the cave and the three men were shut in.

"Then one of them called to the others, saying: 'Now, think of such good deeds as you have done and

call on Allah, beseeching him, so that for the sake of them perchance he may cleave this rock before us!

"Then one of them cried, saying: 'Allah! Of a truth, have I not my parents, who are old and feeble, and my children besides, of whom I am the sole protector? And when I return to them, I do milk the cows and give first the milk to my parents, even before giving it to my children . . . So therefore cause this rock to cleave before us, that through the same we may perceive the sky.' Then Allah caused a cleft to split in the rock, and through it they perceived the sky.

"Then the second one cried and said: 'Allah! Was there not the daughter of my uncle, whom I loved passionately, as only man can love? And when I sought to possess her, she refused me, saying that I should bring her a hundred pieces of gold. Then I made effort, and collected those hundred pieces, bringing them to her . . . And now, verily as thou knowest that I did this from the fear of thy face, so therefore cleave unto us again a portion of this rock.' And Allah vouchsafed to cleave thereof another cleft.

"Then the last man cried and said: 'Allah! Did I not hire a serving man, and when his task was accomplished, he said to me: "Now give me my fee." And I gave to him his fee; but he would not receive it and despised it. Then I ceased not to use the same for sowing till by its produce I became possessed of cattle. And after a long time, the man came to me and said: "Fear Allah, and oppress me not; but give me my

fee." And I, answering him, said: "Go thou, then, to these cattle and their herdsmen and receive them . . ." And he took them and went his way. And now, since thou knowest how I did this thing in fear of thy face, do thou cause what of this rock remaineth to be cleft before us.'

"Then Allah caused the whole rock to become cleft before them, and the three men went out from the cave and saved their lives."

## 217. THE WILDERNESS OF SHUR

On the southeast of Palestine stretches the wilderness of Shur, which is a part of the desert of Sinai. Abraham said unto Sarah: "Behold thy maid (Hagar) is in thy hand, do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarah dealt hardly with her she fled from her face. And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain on the way to Shur . . . and said unto her: 'Return to thy mistress' . . ." "Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea and they went out into the wilderness of Shur and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water."

"The wilderness of Shur," related the Sages of Israel, "was eight hundred parasangs by eight hundred parasangs and swarmed with serpents and scorpions and evil beasts."

Rabbi Jose said, "The serpents there were as big as beams, and the scorpions the size of fists . . ."

It is told that King Shabur had to pass through it. His first caravan was swallowed by snakes; so were his second and third. And the king was greatly grieved . . . So his people brought ten warriors . . . and these filled the skins of beasts with straw and rolled them before each serpent. Each snake swallowed them till its belly was full to bursting and it could not move. Then they were able to slay it.

## THE SOURCES OF THE LEGENDS

The Sages of Israel said:

"He who acknowledges his authorities brings redemption to the world!"

"Trace your sources even as far back as to Moses—if you can!"

### 1. The Stone of Foundation.

A. According to *Tanhuma ha-Kadum*, *Kedoshim* 10.

B. *Derek Erez Zutta*, 9. *Midrash be-Hokmah yasad Arev*, in the Periodical *Bet ha-Midrash* (ed. Jellinek), V (1873), p. 63.

C. Yer. Sanh. 10.2; Bab. Mak. 11a; Suk. 49a, 53a.

D. *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer* 10.5. About Jerusalem as the navel of the earth, see W. H. Roscher, *Omphalos* (1913); *Neue Omphalosstudien* (1915). *Der Omphalosgedanke bei verschiedenen Völkern, besonders den semitischen* (1918). A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites concerning the Navel of the Earth* (1917). Christians point out a particular spot in the Church of the Sepulcher in Jerusalem as the "center of the world." They sometimes call it in Arabic—*Nafs al-Dunya*, the soul of the world.

### 2. The Stone of Paradise.

A. Mujir al-Din, who was a Moslem judge in Jerusalem, wrote about this in the year 1496 in his book: *Kitab al-Uns al-Jalil be-Taarikh al-Kuds wal-Khalil* (1866), pp. 113-4, 209. A quaint tradition about the Stone of Foundation and Weaving is found in Yer. Ta'an. 4. 64c (Pes. 4. 30d). Rabbi Zera said, about 300 C.E.: "Women who do not weave (in Aramaic: *meshtiya*) from the beginning of the month of Ab (till the ninth of the month, i.e. the days of the destruction of the Temple) follow a good old custom, because in this month the Stone of Foundation stops (its function), as is written in the Book of Psalms (11.3): 'If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?'"

B. Mujir al-Din (p. 371) relates that Abu-Bakr bin al-Arabi (1076-1148) pretends to have seen the rock floating in the air.



The floating rock is mentioned by the Karaite Samuel ben David in 1641. *Ozar Massa'ot* (note 8), p. 195; Rabbi Hagiz (note 29), p. 12a; *Hibbat Yerushalayim* (note 40), p. 49. It was also said that the tomb of Mohammed is floating in the air. The Greek poet Nonnus, who lived in Egypt at the end of the fourth century, relates that as a result of an oracle from Melkart, the Tyrians were enabled to fix floating rocks of the shore of their country and make them the foundation of their island where they built their city of Tyre. See: *Nonni Panopolitani Dionysiaca*, Lib. 40, ed. A. Ludwich (1911), II, p. 302.

C. The Moslem traveler Ali al-Herawi in 1173 mentions the Well of Souls. See his "Kitab al-Ziarat" in *Archives de l'Orient latin*, I (1881), p. 600. Near the mosque of Omar, there is a little dome called *Kubbat al-Arwah*, the dome of the Souls. Ibn-Abbas said: "The souls of believers are at al-Jabiya in Golan (Transjordan) and the souls of unbelievers are at Barhut in Hadarmut (Southern Arabia). See Kazwini (note 45B), 117. About the stories of the priests see: Mishnah Shek. 6; Talmud Yoma 54. See Legend 58.

### 3. The Stone of Drinking.

A. Mujir al-Din (note 2A), p. 206.

B. Yer. Yoma 5.3; Ps. 87.

### 4. The Stone and the Name.

According to *Targum Yerushalmi* I to Ex. 18.30; *Midrash Kohelet*, 3.2; *Sefer Toledot Yeshu*, ed. S. Ch. Wagenseilius, *Tela ignea Satanae* (1681), II, pp. 6-7. See S. Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu* (1902), pp. 40, 279. It is told that after Jesus learned the Name of God he went to the cave of Elijah (Legend 141) to hide himself. When he entered he uttered the Name and the entrance of the cave shut itself. Rabbi Judah Gannana came to this cave and said: Cave, cave, open—because I am the messenger of the living God!—When the cave heard this, it opened and Jesus escaped and stayed on Mount Carmel . . . See L. Ginzberg, *Ginze Schechter* (1928), vol. I, pp. 332, 336.

### 5. The Fragment of the Rock.

Told to me by a servant of the Mosque of Omar.

## 6. The Stone of Eden.

The historian Abd al-Rabbih, in the year 913, in his book *Al-Ikd al-Farid* (*The String of Beads*), 1876, p. 164. The northern Gate of the Mosque of Omar is called now: *Bab al-Finnah*, the Gate of Eden. The Spanish traveler Badia-y-Leyblich, better known by the name of al-Abbassi, who visited the Mosque of Omar in 1807, tells about this stone with the nails, "which are supposed to have been pulled out by the devil when he wished to enter Paradise and was prevented by not being able to pull out the nails, which remain." See: *Voyages d'Ali Bey el-Abbassi*, III (1814), p. 143. Jamal Pasha, the Turkish High Commissioner of Palestine during the great war, took away this stone. See T. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (1927), p. 28. It is also said that under this stone is hidden the source of the waters of which Ezekiel the prophet says (47.1): "Afterwards he brought me again unto the door of the house; and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward . . ." In Talmud Yoma 77, we are told about a fountain which issues from the Holy of Holies and reaches to the gate of the Temple . . . and then to the gate of the enclosure. From here it becomes stronger and runs up until it arrives at the gate of the house of David. When it arrives at this point it turns into a strong river and the impure people come and bathe in it so that they may be purified.

## 7. The Birds that Turned to Stone.

According to G. H. Hanauer, *Folk-Lore of the Holy Land* (1907), p. 47. Lady I. Burton tells, in 1871, about this marble whose veins represent two birds: "Solomon ordered all the birds, beasts and fishes to pay him tribute, when two magpies rebelled and induced the others to mutiny. On this account the King condemned them to remain in marble to the end of time. He also ordered the roof of the Temple to be covered with golden needles or fine spikes, that no bird might perch upon it or soil it." See *Inner Life of Syria*, II (1875), p. 89. Abu Al-Raihan Al-Biruni writes, in the year 1000 C.E., about stones with inscriptions not cut in the surface of them, but marked by their natural veins: "People relate that in the Mosque in Jerusalem, there is a white stone, with a nearly obliterated inscription to this effect: Mohammed is the prophet of God, may God be merciful to him. See his book *Athar al-Bakiya*, ed. C. F. Sachau (1878), p. 298.

## 8. Ha-Reubeni in the Mosque of Omar.

According to *Ozar Massa'ot*, a collection of itineraries by Jewish travelers, edited in Hebrew by J. D. Eisenstein (1926), p. 144. Now there is fixed on the top of the Mosque of Omar a crescent in the shape of a circle which faces the South. It is told that in the year 1060 C.E. the great lantern that hung in the Dome of the Rock fell down, and there were in it 500 lamps. Those of the Moslems who were there augured evil therefrom, saying: "Of a surety there will happen some ominous event in Islam!" See *JRAS (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society)*, New Series, XIX (1887), p. 287.

## 9. The Miracle of the Candles.

The itinerary of Rabbi Meshullam is published in *Ozar Massa'ot* (note 8), p. 100. Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro writes in 1489: "The matter of the candles which are said to extinguish themselves on *Tish'ah be-Ab* . . . although I heard of that miracle here also, but it is not clear to me." See *Ozar Massa'ot*, p. 121.

## 10. The Mountain of Moriah.

A. Lev. Rab. 31; *Midrash Kohen*.

B. *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*, 20; Yer. Naz. 7.3; Gen. 3.23; Gen. Rab. 22.7; Maimonides, *Yad ha-Hazakah*, *Hilkot Bet ha-Be'irah*, 2.2. Compare note 79.

C. *Mekilta*, *Yitro*, 4; *Sifri*, *Vezot ha-Berakah*, 352.

## 11. The Dome of the Chain.

Abd al-Rabbiḥ (note 6), p. 338, writes briefly about this chain. The legend is given by Abd-allah Yakut in 1225, *Kitab Mu'jam Al-Buldan*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, vol. IV, p. 593. The Persian Khosrau (1047) (note 31), speaks also of this Dome. "The Chain is that which David hung up, and it was so that none who spoke not the truth could grasp it." According to another tradition King David received from the angel Gabriel not a chain, but an iron rod, with the command to span it across his judgment-hall, and on it to hang a bell. When the rod was touched in turn by plaintiff and defendant, the bell sounded for the one with whom the right lay. See G. Weil, *Biblische Legenden der Muselmänner* (1845), p. 215. Makdissi

(note 44B), p. 46, states that in the village of al-Jish, that is Gush Halab, was preserved the chain of David. He mentions this tradition as of doubtful authority.

## 12. The Throne of Solomon.

A. The anonymous pilgrim from Bordeaux (France), who visited Jerusalem in the year 333 C.E., describes the buildings on Mount Moriah. "There is also here a crypt, in which Solomon used to torture devils . . . There also is the chamber in which he sat and wrote the *Book of Wisdom*; this chamber is covered with a single stone." *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, ed. P. Geyer. *Itinera Hierosolymitana* (1898), p. 21. Abd al-Rabbih (note 6) mentions only the name of this place, Kursi Sulaiman. The Persian Hamdallah Mustawfi from Kazwin relates, in the year 1340: "Solomon on a certain day went to view the building of the Mosque. While there, as he was leaning on his staff, Azrail (the Angel of Death) by command of the Lord Almighty, took possession of his soul. So (being dead) he stood there, quite still, leaning on his staff while a year passed and the building of the walls of the Mosque reached completion. Meanwhile an ant had eaten through the wood of the staff, which broke forthwith, so that he fell down, and the news of his death was spread abroad." See *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, ed. G. le Grange (1915), p. 16.

B. According to Canaan (note 6).

## 13. The Holy Nettle Tree.

According to T. Canaan, *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (1914), p. 62. The end I heard from an Arab round Bethlehem.

## 14. The Well of the Leaf.

The various versions of this legend were collected by Shams al-Din Al-Sayuti, who visited Jerusalem in the year 1470. See Guy le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (1890), p. 198. It is said that this leaf was "like the leaf of a peach-tree (*Durak*) of the size of the palm of the hand, and pointed at the tip." Yakut (note 11), IV, p. 159, mentions this legend in connection with a well in Al-Kelt where Omar camped when he came to Palestine.

## 15. The Bath of Healing.

A servant here told me this story. A French traveler, Florent Goujon, who visited Palestine in the year 1669, writes about "this beautiful Jordan which becomes lost in the Dead Sea and after passing underground flows out into the Red Sea and thence into the Great Sea (Mediterranean). This was proved by the incident which happened to a pilgrim who dropped a curiously wrought wooden cup into the river Jordan. He arrived at Messina (in Sicily) having completely forgotten the cup, and discovered it in the hands of those who had found it on the seashore. He did not hesitate to buy it at once, and without bargaining very much either." *Histoire et l'oyage de la Terre Sainte* (1671), p. 225. See Legend 53.

## 16. The Gate of Sin.

According to the Koran 2.55; Abd al-Rabbiḥ (note 6), p. 368.

## 17. The Gate of Mercy.

A. Treatise *Soferim* 19.12.

B. *Pethahiah of Regensburg*, ed. A. Benisch (1861), p. 64. Pethahiah came to Palestine during the reign of the Crusaders. His Itinerary was first published in Hebrew by the name *Sibub* (the circle of) *Rabbi Petahyah*. The Karaite traveler Moses Yerushalmi, in the year 1654 (*Ozar Massa'ot*, p. 210) (see note 8), speaks about the two gates of mercy: "They are closed with stones and they will not be opened till the eyes of Israel will be opened to see their redemption. It is said that on several occasions the Arabs tried to open the gate but a miracle happened whereby they could not do so, and they knew that this was from God." Ezekiel the prophet, in speaking of his vision, uses the words: "Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the Lord unto me: This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut."

C. Lam. 2.9. The Letter of Isaac bar Musa is published in the *Hebrew Union College Annual*, IV (1927), p. 459.

## 18. The Ancient Jerusalem.

*Pirke de-Rabbi Kahana*, 15; *Pesikta Rabbati*, 26; *Midrash Ruth Zutta*, 8; Talmud Ta'an.; Mujir al-Din (note 2A), p. 398.

## 19. The Destruction of Jerusalem.

A. Talmud B.M. 30.

B. *Pesikta*; *Yalkut Shim'oni*.

C. *Tanhuma ha-Kadum*, *Tezaveh*; *Pesikta Rabbati*, 1.

D. Talm. B.B. 60; *Derek Erez Zutta*; *Perek ha-Shalom*.

## 20. The Mourning for Jerusalem.

A. Talmud M.K. 26; Semah. 9; Yer. Ber. 9.2; J. Caro, *Shulhan Aruk*, *Orah Hayyim*, 561.

B. Talmud Mak. 24.

C. Talmud Ta'an. 30; *Pesikta Rabbati*, 28.

## 21. The Comforting of Jerusalem.

According to *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* 16; Hos. 14.6; Joel 4.17; Amos 9.11; Micah 7.18; Nah. 2.1; Zeph. 3.13; Isa. 40.1.

## 22. The Eternal Jerusalem.

A. Talmud Hag. 12a; B.B. 75b; *Pesikta Rabbati*, 100. See Tertullian, *Opera, Adversus Marcionem*, III, 24, ed. A. Kroymann (1906), p. 419. St. Epiphanius, who was born in Palestine of Jewish parents, writes in 317 about a desolate spot in Phrygia (Western Asia Minor) called Pepusa, once the site of a town, which had been leveled with the ground, and adds, it is expected that the heavenly Jerusalem will descend here. See *Praedestinatus Sive Praedestinatorum Haeresis*, XXVII, *MPCC* (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*), vol. LIII (1847), p. 596.

B. *Pesikta Rabbati*; *Tanhuma ha-Kadum* 58, 17.

C. *Sefer Eliyahu u-Pirke Mashiah*, in Periodical *Bet ha-Midrash*, III (note 1B), p. 74; *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*.

## 23. The Keys of Jerusalem.

According to E. Pierotti, *Customs and Traditions of Palestine* (1864), pp. 75-77. The Italian Pierotti was an engineer to the Pasha of Jerusalem in the middle of the 19th century.

## 24. The Synagogue of Elijah.

The beadle of the synagogue told this to me. Rabbi Jacob, who came to Palestine about 1228, mentions the Synagogue of Elijah in Jerusalem: "There is hewn in the wall a place for the holy scroll and on the stone is engraved a name of four letters." A Jewish traveler in 1522 (note 44A) tells about the synagogues of Safed: "And one is called the Synagogue of Elijah. It is very old, and there is a tradition that Elijah prayed here." See Legend 75

## 25. The Synagogue of Johanan.

I visited this place in 1928 and was told this by the beadle.

## 26. The Synagogue of Bethel.

I heard this from an old scholar whom I met here.

## 27. The Everlasting Wall.

According to Cant. Rab. 2.22, and Lam. Rab. 1.32. See *Memo-randum on the Western Wall Submitted to the Special Commission of the League of Nations* (1930), prepared by Dr. Cyrus Adler.

## 28. How the Wall Was Discovered.

A. Isaac ben Josef Heilo of Spain sent letters from Palestine to his family, which were collected and called *Shebile Yerushalayim* (*The Paths of Jerusalem*). The Hebrew manuscript disappeared from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. I used the French translation by E. Carmoly, *Itinéraires de la Terre Sainte* (1847), p. 250.

B. Rabbi Eliezer Nahman Puah, disciple of Menahem Azariah de Fano (1548-1620), mentions that in his book, *Midrash be-Hiddush* (ed. Venice, 1641), p. 31a, which is a commentary to the *Haggadah* of Passover, the Legend was written as an interpretation of Ps. 113.7: "God lifteth up the needy from the dunghill."

## 29. The Sultan and the Wall.

Moses Hagiz, who lived in Palestine (1671-1750), mentions it in his booklet *Parashat Eleh Massa'ay* (1738?) (*The Story of my travels*). It is repeated in *Hibbat Yerushalayim* (note 39), p. 45b,

and in *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 55. The Moslem historians relate that when Omar conquered the Holy City, in the year 638 C.E., he found on the Stone of Foundation great quantities of dung which the Romans had thrown there as an insult to the Jews. When Omar came to Mount Moriah, the Jews told him the place of the Rock and Omar spread his cloak and began to remove all the dung, and so did the Moslems who accompanied him. See *JRAS* (note 8), N.S., XIX (1887), p. 280. The Jewish historian Joseph Samberi, writes in 1673, "Two years before the Turkish Sultan Salim conquered Palestine and Egypt, he was told by a Jewish scholar, Solomon Dil-Midrash, that he would succeed in conquering these countries. And the scholar referred to the words of the prophet Isaiah (19.4): 'And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord, and a fierce king shall rule over them' (in Hebrew: *Melek 'Az yimshol bam*). The word '*Az* is equal to the number 77, that is the Jewish date (52)77 = 1517 C.E., the year of the conquest of Egypt and Palestine by the Turks. And the word *yimshol* = *Sholim* = Salim." See *Dibre Yosef*, ch. 104, p. 79a. Ms. in the Library of the Alliance Israélite in Paris. See also S. A. Rosanes, *Dibre Yeme ha-Yehudim be-Togarma*, vol. I, p. 90.

### 30. The Wall and the Divine Presence.

A. The story of Rabbi Nathan is told in *Seder Eliyahu Rabba*, ch. 38, ed. M. Friedmann (*Ish Shalom*) 1902, p. 149; of David ben Zimra, by I. M. Sofer (Schreiber), *Maḥazeh Erez ha-Kedoshah* (1891). In *Yalkut* on Jer. 15 it is related that to the prophet Jeremiah appeared a woman dressed in black, who said: "I am the mother of Zion."

B. Rabbi Zebi Hirsh Kaydanower (d. 1712) in his book: *Kav ha-Yashar* (ch. 93), which first appeared in 1705. I used the second edition, 1722, p. 171. Rabbi Hayim J. D. Azulai, who was born in Jerusalem in 1724, tells the same story very briefly in his book *Shem ha-Gedolim*, ed. Ben-Yacob (1864), p. 5.

### 31. The Wall of the Poor.

This was told to me by a Jewish boy, in the year 1922, at Jerusalem. Also according to Moslem tradition the Divine Presence rests on the western side of the Temple mount. The present *Bab al-Silsilah* (the gate of the chain), which is in the western side of



the Mosque of Omar, near the Wailing Wall, was called by the Arabs *Bab al-Sakinah*, the gate of the Divine Presence. The Persian traveler Nasir Khosrau, in 1047, writes about this gate: "They say that the Ark of the *Sakinah* . . . was once placed here, but was borne away by Angels." See his book *Sefer Nameh*, ed. C. Schefer (1881).

### 32. The Wall and the Dove.

A. I have heard it many times in Jerusalem. There is a special book called *Sha'are Dim'ah* (The Gates of Tears), containing the lamentations of the Wailing Wall.

B. Talmud Ber. 3a.

### 33. The Wall and the Nails.

Isa. 22.23; Ezra 9.8; Ex. Rab. 5.5. Footnote: Yer. Hag. 3.1.

### 34. The Bent Stone.

The dispute of the scholars is mentioned in Talmud B.M. 59b; here it is said that this happened in the town of Jabneh (note 112). A Jewish lad of Jerusalem told this to me in connection with Robinson's Arch.

### 35. The Gate of Lions.

According to Hanauer (note 7), p. 94. The Turkish Sultan Sulaiman rebuilt the wall in 1542. The Italian I. Zuallardo in 1586 speaks about the two carved lions at St. Stephen's Gate (*Porta S. Stephani*), "which are being made contrary to the Turkish law" (note 56), p. 160.

### 36. The Two Architects.

According to Hanauer (note 7), p. 96.

### 37. The Tomb of David.

See *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, ed. M. N. Adler (1907), p. 28. Tudela, who was the greatest Jewish traveler of medieval times, visited Palestine in the year 1170, during the reign of the Crusaders

## 38. The Sword of the Pasha.

L. Fraenkel, *Nach Jerusalem* (1858), II. Ludwig Fraenkel, Ritter von Hochwart, was an Austrian Jewish poet and writer. In the year 1856 he went to Jerusalem and founded there a Jewish school and philanthropic institution. *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 53, tells a third legend about the tomb of David and a laundry woman.

## 39. The Tombs of the Kings.

Heilo in 1333 (note 28A) speaks about the palace of Queen Helena. *Pausaniae Descriptio Graeciae*, VIII, 16.

## 40. The Cave of Kalba Sabbua'.

Hayyim Halevi Hurwitz, *Hibbat Yerushalayim* (The Love of Jerusalem) (1884), p. 43b. Hurwitz came from Russia to Palestine in 1820. He lived in Safed and Jerusalem and wrote his book about 1834.

## 41. The Tree of Isaiah.

In Yer. Sanh. 10, it is said that Isaiah was swallowed up by a cedar tree (*arza*). In *Pesikta Rabbati*, 64, by a carob-tree (*haruba*), and now it becomes a mulberry tree (*tuf*). The traveler from Bordeaux (note 12A) said that he saw the tomb of Isaiah in the brook of Kidron, "which is a true monolith." Antoninus Martyr (570) writes: "We came to the place where the prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder and he lies buried under the oak tree of Rogel, near the watercourse. The saw is preserved for a testimony at the tomb of the Holy Zacharias" (ed. Geyer, p. 180). In an old guide-book to Palestine, about 1350, called *Peregrinatio totius terre sancte*, it is written: "You come to a place . . . where Isaiah was sawn asunder with a saw of wood by Manasseh, King of Jerusalem." *PPTS* (Palestine Pilgrims Text Society) VI (1894), p. 14. On an old map of Jerusalem, dating from the year 1609, is shown the tree of Isaiah. See Bernardino Amico da Gallipoli, *Trattato delle Piante et Imagini dei Sacri Edificii di Terra Santa* (1609).

## 42. The Grave of Kalonymos.

It is difficult to find who this Kalonymos is. Rabbi Samuel de-Abilah from Morocco wrote a book called *Keter Torah* (1725)

(The Crown of the Torah), and in its preface there is a letter signed in the year 1548 by the Rabbis of Jerusalem. The first signature is "Kalonymos the son of Jacob." Probably this is the Kalonymos of the above legend. Rabbi Hagiz (note 29), p. 3, mentions the grave of Kalonymos in Jerusalem which "according to the traditions of old, is in a closed cave, near the Jewish cemetery." The first who mentions this legend is the Rabbi of Jerusalem, Israel Jacob Algazi, about 1750, in his book: *Shalme Zibbur*, ch. *Shalme Hagigah* (ed. 1790). See also Fraenkel (note 38), p. 281. Rabbi Naphtali Baruch tells that the Sephardic Jews of Jerusalem used to light a candle in their synagogue *Talmud Torah* (near Rabbi Johanan ben Zaccai, Leg. 25) in memory of Kalonymos. In this synagogue was found the corpse of the heathen and here happened the miracle on a spot which is called *Mekom ha-Nes shel Rabbi Kalonymos*, the place of the miracle of Kalonymos. See A. L. Frumkin, *Toledot Hakme Yerushalayim*, vol. I (1930), p. 98.

#### 43. The Cave of Simeon the Just.

A. Talmud B.B., 75a.

B. Fraenkel (note 38), p. 270. Jerusalem is the center of all the waters of the world (Legend 3), therefore it is the best place where one can pray for rain. Mujir al-Din (note 2A) writes: "Solomon asked from Allah the favor that everyone praying for rain in Jerusalem should obtain it. When the Israelites were in need of rain they made an image of Jerusalem, directed their prayers towards it, and then rain would not cease to fall." Very often, when the rain did not come, the Arabs blamed the Jews because they drink wine, which Moslems do not do. Once when a governor blamed the Jews for causing the drought, they paid him 200 ducats, so that the blame should not be attached to them. This money was collected mainly from the Jews who made wine.

#### 44. The Tomb of Samuel.

A. Jacob Baruch, *Shibhe Yerushalayim* (1785), p. 24b. In this book is also published an itinerary of an anonymous Jewish traveler who visited Palestine in the year 1522. It is called: *Parashat Elle Massa'ay, the Story of My Travels*.

B. The Moslem Shams al-Din al-Makdissi (from Jerusalem) writes about this in the year 984 C.E. See his book: *Ahsan al-*

*Takassım fi Muarif al-Akalim* (ed. de Goeje, 1877), p. 188. *ZDPI* (*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina Vereins*), XLI (1918), pp. 157-161.

#### 45. The Cave of Zedekiah.

A. II Kings 25.5 it says only: "The army of the Chaldees pursued the King Zedekiah and overtook him on the plain of Jericho." In Talmud 'Erub. 61b; Ta'an. 29, is mentioned the name *Me'arat Zidkiyahu Melek Yehudah*, the Cave of Zedekiah, the King of Judah. See *Pesikta Rabbati*, 26. In the well-known Jewish commentary of Rashi (1040-1105), (repeated by D. Kimhi, 1230) to II Kings 25.4, the legend is mentioned.

B. I heard this from some children in Jerusalem. It is told according to the story in Cant. Rab. 1.10. Makdissi, p. 185, writes (note 44B): "There is at Jerusalem, without the city, a huge cavern. According to what I have heard from learned men, and have also read in books, it leads into the place where lie the people slain by Moses. But there is no surety in this." The people slain by Moses are the sons of Korah who were swallowed up in the earth; and the cavern which is mentioned above is probably the cave of Zedekiah. The well-known story teller Rabbah bar bar Hana narrates (in Talmud B.B. 74a) that while he was traveling in the desert an Arab showed him the place of Korah's engulfment. There was at this spot a slit in the ground into which he introduced some wool soaked in water. The wool immediately began to burn. On placing his ear to the slit he heard voices cry: "Moses and his Torah are true and we are liars!" The Moslem historian Kazwini, in his *Kitab Ajaib al-Mahlukat* (ed. Wüstenfeld, 1849), p. 154, writes the following about another cave: "In the mountains of Jerusalem there is a cave like a room, built of massive stones. Pilgrims come here, and when the darkness of the night spreads, there appears in the cave an exceedingly bright light, although there is neither a lamp nor a hole whence light can penetrate from outside."

#### 46. The Synagogue of ha-Ramban.

A. The letter of ha-Ramban is published at the end of his book, *Sha'ar ha-Gemul* (1490), *The Gate of the Benefit*. I used the 1556 edition, p. 26.

B. I heard this story in Jerusalem. According to Pierotti, *Jerusalem Explored*, I (1864), pp. 38, 236 (note 23), this cave is

called in Arabic: *Sadakat al-akl*. I think it better to call it *Sadakat al-ahl*, the Alms of the People. See also G. Dalman: *Jerusalem und sein Gelände* (1930), p. 180.

#### 47. The Cave of the Lion.

Eugesippus, *MPCC* (note 22A) CXXXIII (1864), p. 1002; *La Cité de Jérusalem*, ed. Tobler, p. 215. The first Jewish traveler who mentions the cave of the lion is Rabbi Jacob, the messenger, of the school of Paris who came to Palestine about 1228. I used the Hebrew text in *Ozar Massa'ot* (note 8), p. 67. The same tale is repeated in *Tozaot Erez-Israel*, written about 1300 by an anonymous pupil of ha-Ramban. See the Hebrew text published in the special volume, *Yerushalayim (Journal of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society)* (1928), p. 57. Rabbi Jacob bar Nathanel ha-Cohen writes in the twelfth century about a lion who guards a holy tomb: "On a high mountain in the midst of a forest is to be found a grave of Zipporah, the wife of Moses. It is guarded by a lion and no man is permitted to enter it, nor dare any one cut down the trees of the forest." *Ozar Massa'ot*, p. 61.

#### 48. The Pillar of Absalom.

A. II Sam. 18.18. I heard this from an old Jewess in Jerusalem who said that this king was Napoleon.

B. It is told (II Sam. 18.17) that after the death of Absalom a very great heap of stones was laid upon him. Bernardin Surinus, *Le Pieux Pèlerin au Voyage de Jérusalem*, II (1666), p. 404.

C. The Arab names I heard in the village of Silwan. II Kings 15.5; II Chron. 26.21. The explanation of *Bet ha-Hofshit* is given by Rashi in his commentary to Talmud Hor. 10a. In fact the *Bet ha-Hofshit* is a cave of the tombs of the priests from the Beni-Heizir family.

#### 49. The Monument of Zechariah.

II Chron. 24.20. The traveler of Bordeaux (note 12A), p. 22. According to Jerome (340-420) in his commentary to Matth. 24, mention is made of red stones stained with the blood of Zacharias which were shown in the ruins of the Temple. The name of Pharaoh is connected with other localities in Palestine, see Legend 215.

## 50. The Stone of Haninah.

According to Midrash Eccl. Rab. I.

## 51. The Finger of Og, King of Bashan.

According to Talmud Ber. 54a; Niddah 24b.

## 52. The Fountain of Gihon.

A. Gen. Rab. 22.7; I Kings, 1.38.

B. The name 'Bath of Ishmael' is known among the Sephardic Jews of Jerusalem. Mishnah Yoma 1.1-7; Lev. Rab. 21. The Fountain of Gihon is called by Josephus the Bath of Solomon. See *Bellum Judaicum*, 5, 6, 2. The Christians call it St. Mary's Fountain (in Arabic '*Am Sitt Mariam*') or the Virgin's Fount. It is related that here Mary used to wash the swaddling clothes of her son Jesus. See S. Sigali (1384), *Viaggio in Terra Santa* (1873). Balqis, the daughter of King Sharahil (Queen of Sheba), got rid of the hair growing on her legs and thighs by taking a bath in this fountain. See Canaan (note 6), p. 60.

## 53. The Pool of Siloam.

II Chronicles, 32; Rabbi Jacob ha-Cohen (note 8), *Ozar Massa'ot*, p. 59. The well of Ascalon is already mentioned by Benjamin (note 37), who calls it by the Arab name: *Bir Ibrahim al-Khalil*, and says that Abraham dug it in the time of the Philistines. Jerome mentions, in his commentary to Isa. 8.6, the irregular flow of the water of Siloam. Bordeaux (note 12), p. 22. Rivers and springs which flow during the week days but dry up on the Sabbath are well known. Josephus says that when Titus marched from Beryth (Beirut) in Syria, driving before him the Jewish captives, "he saw a river . . . its current is strong and has plenty of water (on the seventh day), after which its spring fails for six days together and leaves the channel dry. They call it the Sabbatic River (Sabbation or Sambation)." Pliny also speaks of the same river, but he says the river runs rapidly for six days in the week and stops on the seventh. When Turnus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiba why Saturday was superior to any other day, Akiba answered: "The River Sambation proves it . . . during the weekdays it runs and causes stones to drift, but on Saturday it ceases to flow." Rabbi Pethahiah (note 17B)

says that in Jabneh (No. 112) (another version gives the place as Acco) there is a spring which runs during six days in the week, but on the Sabbath not a single drop is found in it. Such a Sabbatic spring was shown at Sepphoris (No. 157). Makdissi (note 44B), p. 171. Kazwini, p. 192 (note 45B) and E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (1867), p. 1418.

#### 54. Who Discovered the Gihon?

Rabbi Hayyim Vital lived in Jerusalem about 1578. The legend is mentioned by Azulai (note 30B), p. 29. See also *Hibbat Yerushalayim* (note 40), p. 47; Talmud Ber. 10.

#### 55. How Ezra Found the Torah.

According to E. Pierotti, *Jerusalem Explored*, I (1864), p. 230. See note 23.

#### 56. The Well of Job.

According to Hanauer (note 7). This well was created, according to the words of the Koran: 21.83. "And remember our servant Job; when he cried unto his Lord, saying, Verily Satan hath afflicted me with calamity and pain. And it was said unto him: Strike the earth with thy foot; which, when he had done, a fountain sprung up, and it was said to him: This is for thee to wash in; to refresh thee, and to drink." There are other wells attributed to Job. Sir J. Mandeville (1336) writes, p. 72: "Between the hills of that country (Samaria) there is a well that four times in the year changes its colour, sometimes green, sometimes red, sometimes clear and sometimes troubled, and men call that well, Job." See also Arnold von Harff (1498), ed. E. von Grote, p. 194. Another well of Job was shown on the way from Jaffa to Jerusalem near the village which is now called Deir Ayyub, the monastery of Job. The Italian traveler Zuallardo in 1586 mentions this well, *Pizzo di S. Giob*, which was made by the prophet Job. See his book: *Il Devotissimo Viaggio di Gierusalemme* (1587), p. 177. See also Legend 211.

#### 57. The Well of Nehemiah.

According to II Macc. 1.22-30. Medieval Christian pilgrims identify the story with the well of Job.

## 58. The Fountain of Zedekiah.

'*Emek ha-Melek* (note 75), p. 14a. *Hibbat Yerushalayim* (note 40), p. 20b and *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 33. See Leg. 2C.

## 59. The Mount of Olives.

A. Jer. 3.17; Zech. 14; Joel 4.

B. *Tanhuma ha-Kadum*, 23; *Midrash Mishle*, 17. A description of the resurrection in Jerusalem is to be found also in *Alpha-Bet* (or *Otiyot*) *de-Rabbi Akiba*, which was written before the eighth century, first published in 1520 (?). Zuallardo (note 56), p. 166, in 1586, tells about Pilate's house in Jerusalem: "It was believed that the groans of Jews awaiting the Day of Judgment could be heard here."

## 60. The Two Bridges.

A well-known legend in Jewish folklore.

## 61. The Mount of Anointment.

A. *Targum Yerushalmi* to Gen. 8.2. Ephraim the Syrian (c. 360), ed. Lagarde, 80, 82.

B. Gen. 12.4-5. Uri ben Simon lived in Safed in the sixteenth century. His book, *Zekut ha-Abot weha-Nebiim* (Merit of the Patriarchs and the Prophets) is an extract of an anonymous manuscript written in 1537. I used the Hebrew text published by H. Hottinger, *Cippi Hebraici* (1659), p. 31. See also the Karaite traveler, Samuel ben David (1641), *Ozar Massa'ot*, p. 197.

C. According to Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine*, I (1899), p. 299.

## 62. The Valley of Hinnom.

A. Jer. 7.31-33, and the commentary of Rashi.

B. Talmud 'Er. 19a; Suk. 32b.

C. *Yalkut* on Jer., 277.

## 63. The Valley of Slaughter.

According to the QS (*Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund*), 1894, p. 210. Probably this ruler of Egypt was the



well-known Caliph Hakem be-Ameri Allah, who ruled in 1000-1027 and was a great persecutor of Christians as well as Jews.

#### 64. The Destruction of Beth-ther.

- A. Talmud Git. 57-58.
- B. Yer. Ta'an. 4.
- C. Lam. Rab. 3.
- D. Isaac Heilo (note 28A), p. 244.

#### 65. The Vision of Beth-el.

A. Gen. 27; Talmud Hul. 91b; Gen. Rab. 68.13.  
 B. In *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer* 35, it is said: "Jacob was on Mount Moriah and there he saw the angels." It is said that the Fragment of the Stone of Foundation (Leg. 5) was Jacob's stone from Beth-el. Most of the medieval Christian travelers speak about the Stone of Foundation (Leg. 1) as the Pillow of Jacob. An anonymous pilgrim in 1145 writes about the Stone of Foundation and the inscription which was round it: "This is the holy ground, here Jacob saw the ladder, here he built his altar. Well may we hang gifts round." Innominatus, VII, ed. Tobler, *Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae* (1874), p. 102. John of Würzburg (1165) adds another inscription which was here: "Jacob, this thy land shall be, and thy children's after thee!" Theodericus, who came to Jerusalem about the year 1172, describes the Mount and the Stone which the patriarch Jacob placed under his head: In front of this place are the following verses: "Jacob, with thy body resting, but with thy mind awake, there saw the ladder, and his altar here did make."

C. According to Heilo (note 28A), p. 250. The old name of Beth-el was Luz (almond tree). The emigrant from Beth-el who was spared and sent abroad by the Israelites because he showed them the entrance to the city when they wanted to conquer it, built a new city for himself in the land of the Hittites and called it Luz (Judg. 1.26). The Sages of Israel talk about the miraculous qualities of Luz: "That is the city known for its blue dye, and it is the city which Sennacherib entered but could not harm! and Nebuchadnezzar could not destroy! The city over which the Angel of Death has no power. Outside the walls of this city the aged, who are tired of life, are placed, and there they meet death" (Talmud Sotah 76b). It is also related that an almond tree with a hole in it

stood before the entrance to a cave that was near Luz; through that hole persons entered the cave and found the way to the city, which was altogether hidden (Gen. Rab. 69.7).

#### 66. The Field of Habakkuk.

According to *Yosippon* 3. Bernard the Wise in 870 mentions this field. The field of Habakkuk was shown also near other places. John Poloner (1422) writes about Acco: "It was near this that the angel of the Lord found Habakkuk. And in the place where he was carried off by the angel there was a fair chapel." *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae* (ed. Tobler), p. 264.

#### 67. The Tomb of Rachel.

A. *Petihta Eka Rabbati*; *Midrash Tanhuma*.

B. Rabbi Pethahiah (note 17B), p. 58. The pilgrim Arculfus, in 670 C.E., writes of the Tomb of Rachel: "It is a building of common workmanship and without ornamentation, surrounded by a stone fence. Even at the present day the inscription with her name can be seen" (ed. Geyer, p. 259). Bernhard von Breidenbach mentions the Tomb of Rachel, "the female pilgrims used to collect certain black stones which lay near as contributing to easy parturition." See his *Peregrinationes in Terram Sanctam* (1486). Breidenbach passed through Palestine in 1483 with a party of pilgrims, among them also Felix Faber (note 79B).

#### 68. The Pools of Solomon.

A. Eccl. 2.5-6; Cant. 4.12.

B. Talmud Shab. 145b.

C. Heilo (note 28A), p. 241. In Talmud Zeb. 57b it is said: "It was at first the intention to build the Temple on the 'En Etam.'" Henry Maundrell, in 1697, writes about Roselayn (Ras al-Ain) which is between Tyre and Acco on the Mediterranean coast: "The place where are the Cisterns, called Solomon's, supposed according to common tradition hereabouts to have been made by that great King as part of his recompense to King Hiram for the supplies of materials sent by him towards the building of the Temple." See his *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem* (1703), p. 49.

## 69. The Praise of Hebron.

- A. Gen. Rab. 4.13.
- B. Talmud Sotah 13a.
- C. Ket. 112a; *Sifri*, 'Ekeb, 37.

## 70. The Cave of Machpelah.

A. Gen. 23.17; Talmud 'Erub. 53a; Gen. Rab. 58.10. The Crusaders sometimes called the Cave of Machpelah by the Latin name *Spelunca Duplex*, The Double Cave.

B. *Zohar* (ed. Vilna), Gen. 57b. On the island of Ceylon is the mountain called Adam's Peak, where there is shown on a big rock a depression which is supposed to resemble a man's footprint. According to the tradition it is the footprint of Adam.

## 71. Esau in the Cave of Machpelah.

According to Talmud Sotah 13; *Midrash Tanhuma ha-Kadum*, *Vayyesheb* 1.

## 72. Rabbi Banna'a in the Machpelah.

Talmud B.B. 58.

## 73. The Voices of Machpelah.

The first part is according to *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 60.

## 74. When the Jews Entered Machpelah.

According to *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 60.

## 75. The Synagogue of Abraham.

I heard this many times in Hebron. Probably this legend originated about the year 1618, when a great plague broke out at Hebron and almost all the Jews fled. See Naphtali (Herz) ben Jacob Elhanan (Bachrach) in his book *'Emek ha-Melek* (The Valley of the King). Various interesting legends are given in the introduction (1648), p. 14. Most of them are reprinted in the book *Shibhe ha-Ari* (1849). See also *Sha'are Yerusha-*

*layim*, p. 55; T. Schwarz, *Tebuot ha-Arez*, ed. Lunz, p. 474, and compare legend No. 24.

#### 76. The Miracle at Hebron

According to *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 56. Fraenkel (note 38), p. 475. *Yerushalayim* (Lunz), IX (1911), p. 322. Perhaps this cruel Sheikh, who reigned over Hebron, is Abd al-Rahman al-Omar of the village Dura, who lived in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

#### 77. Purim of Hebron.

See the periodical *Yerushalayim*, IX, p. 325.

#### 78. The Oak of Abraham.

A. Genesis; Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 4, 9.7.

B. Arculfus (ed. Geyer). The belief that the oak is from the staff of an angel is already mentioned by Julius Africanus, a Christian historian in the third century, who lived in Emmaus (Nicompolis), Palestine. See *Julii Africani Chronographia*, MPCC (note 22) (1857), p. 71. *Eustathii Commentarii*, ed. C. Mullerus. *Geographi Graeci Minores*, II (1861). C. Odoricus de Foro Julii writes in 1320 C.E.: "About this tree well-known the world over as the 'Dry Tree' (*arbor sicca*), the Saracens called it 'dirp.' The tree stood from the time of Abraham till the coming of Jesus and when he was crucified the tree became dry." See his *Liber de Terra Sancta*, ed. I.C.M. Laurent (1864), ch. 46, p. 154. John of Würzburg in 1165 writes: "Though it is dry, the oak of Abraham, yet its healing qualities are proved by the fact that if a horseman carries a piece of it with him, his horse will never stumble."

C. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, Macmillan, 1900, pp. 54-56. Johannes Schiltberger writes in 1410: "The heathens take good care of the tree and for very good reason, because if somebody is afflicted with epilepsy and carries with him a small twig, then he is safe from falling." See his book *Ein Wunderbarliche und Kurtzweilige History* (1549). Near the oak of Abraham there are ruins of great hewn stones called by the Arabs *Ramat al-Khalil*, the plateau of Abraham. The Jews call it *Ohel Abraham*, the tent of Abraham, and regard this spot as the place of Abraham's tent.

## 79. The Field of Adam.

A. Fetellus (note 126), *Innominatus VI*, ed. Newman, p. 99.

B. *Burchardi de monte Sion. Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*, ed. J.C.M. Laurent, *Peregrinationes Medii Aevi Quatuor* (1864), p. 81. The Field of Adam is mentioned almost by every pilgrim of medieval times. See also Jacob ha-Cohen, *Ozar Massa'ot* (note 8), p. 61. *Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae . . .* (1480), ed. Hussler (1843), p. 341. According to one tradition this dust was taken from Mount Moriah (note 10). Another tradition in Talmud Kid. 1 relates that Adam's body was made from the earth of Babylon, his head from the land of Israel, and the rest of his limbs from all other lands. See Kid. 1; *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*, 20; Midrash Tehillim 92.5. Footnote: *Origenes in Matthaeum*, ed. MPCC (note 22), XIII (1857), p. 1777. *Basil Seleuciensis Oratio XXVII*, MPCC, LXXXV (1860), p. 409. Bar Cepha, *De Paradiso* I.14, MPCC, CXI, cols. 487-498. On the Golgotha was set up the cross of Jesus of Nazareth. The pilgrim Seawulf in 1102 speaks about the Golgotha, "where Adam is said to have been raised from the dead, by the stream of our Lord's blood falling upon him," *PPTS*, IV (1892), p. 11. Faber says: "For this reason painters are wont to draw a human skull at the foot of the cross." See Laurent de Saint-Aignan, "Le Tombeau d'Adam et d'Eve", in *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, V (1873), pp. 85-102. In the Sepulcher there is now a "chapel of Adam" and it is said that Adam lies buried there with Melchizedek, the King of Salem (Jerusalem). Modern scholars think that the hill was called Golgotha because it resembled a human skull. See J. Jeremias, *Golgotha* (1926). Jerome says: "According to a Jewish tradition the field where Cain killed Abel is in Damascus. It was so called from the Hebrew word *Dam-Shaca*, irrigated with blood." (*Commentarii* on Ezek. 27.18). On a hill near the ruins of Abila, in the east of Damascus, there is still a tomb *Nebi Habil*, the prophet Hebel. It is said that this is the spot where Cain slew Abel, and the name of the town, Abila, is derived from Abel=Hebel. Compare Legend 10.

## 80. The Praise of Jericho.

A. *Kohelet Zutta* 9.18; *Yosippon* 38.

B. Talmud Suk. 55b.

C. Gen. Rab. 99; *Petihta* Lam. Rab. In the olden days Jericho

and the Dead Sea were places remote from Jewish habitation. When the Sages of Israel wished anybody or anything far away they said: "Let them go to the Dead Sea," or "Lead them to the Dead Sea." Mishnah Tem. 4.2; Tosefta 'Ab. Zarah 6.7; Talmud Naz. 24a, etc. The Sages of Israel taught their pupils: If a man finds utensils upon which there is the figure of the Sun, Moon, or Dragon, he must cast them into the Dead Sea, i.e. he must destroy them. See Mishnah 'Ab. Zarah 3.3. In English literature the name of Jericho is proverbially a place of waiting or obscurity, any distant or out-of-the-way place. The expression 'From Jericho to June,' means a prodigious distance. 'Gone to Jericho'—gone no one knows where. 'Go to Jericho'—begone! 'Stay in Jericho'—Wait until you have grown older and wiser. 'To wish one in Jericho'—to wish one far away. Expressions containing the name of Jericho are thought to have arisen from the words of King David, who said to his servants: "Tarry at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."

### 81. The Jordan of Jericho.

A. Josh. 3.

B. Tal. Sotah 34a; Yer. Sotah 7.31b. On the bank of the Jordan not far from Jericho, there is a monastery called *Kasr al-Yahud*, the palace of the Jews. In bygone days when the spot was covered with ruins it was called *Burj al-Yahud*, the fortress of the Jews. It is called after the Jews because opposite this spot they crossed the Jordan with Joshua, the son of Nun.

### 82. The Spring of Elisha.

II Kings 2.19-22. Footnote: Bordeaux (note 12A).

### 83. The Bubbling Fount.

A Bedouin told me this on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho through the valley of Kelt. Thomas Shaw, in the year 1722, speaks about the valley of Kelt and he calls it: "*Naher al-Farah*, River of the Mouse . . . The reason of the name may arise from hence, that no sooner doth the stream begin to run, than it is immediately lost underground, then riseth again, and in this manner pursueth its course, all the way, into the Valley of Jericho." See his book *Travels or Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant* (1738), p. 373.

## 84. The Haunted Fountain.

*Midrash Tanhuma, Kedoshim 9.*

## 85. The Ascent of Adummim.

Yer. R. H. 2.5. The pilgrim Paula who passed here in 382 explains the name Adummim, blood, "because much blood was shed there in the frequent inroads of robbers" (ed. Tobler, ch. 14). Burchard of Mount Zion writes, in 1280 C.E., about "the castle of Adummim, the place has received its name from the frequent blood shed there." The way from Jerusalem to Jericho which passes at the Ascent of Adummim is always dangerous. The valley of Jericho is called in Arabic *wadi al-sesaban*, the valley of the quaking grass. The Arabs say: "O thou who goest down to the valley of Sesaban, thou descendest well clothed, but comest up naked," because the robbers rob you of your clothes.

## 86. The Rock of the Backs.

I saw this rock on the way to Jericho. See Canaan (note 6), p. 83.

## 87. The Cave of the Spider.

A. Sam. Rab. 2.

B. *Alpha Beta de Ben-Sira*, ed. M. Steinschneider, p. 24. In *Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel* to Ps. 57.3, is mentioned David, who said; "I will pray to the Almighty who ordered the spider to spin a web for my sake." The traveler Heilo (note 28A), p. 246, tells the same legend in connection with Rabbi Nahum Ish Gamso (note 204), who fled to a cave near Ludd. Moslem commentaries of the Koran relate the same of Mohammed when he fled from his enemies. According to the Bible David fled from Saul to the cave of Adullam. Tradition has located this in the desert of Judah at the cave which is now called *Magharat Khareitun*, but the scientific identification is that Adullam was on the southwest of Bethlehem, now called *Chirbet Aid al-Ma* (Eidelmijeh). According to the Bible Adullam was a resort of every one that was in distress, in debt or discontented. In modern political history the expression "Cave of Adullam" (briefly "cave" or "Adullamites") came into use (first by President Lincoln, 1864) for any body of men who secede from their party on some special subject. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Article "Adullam."

## 88. The Cave of the Shepherd.

L. Bauer, *Das Palaestinische Arabisch* (1913), p. 212.

## 89. The Cliff of the Desert.

A. Lev. 16.21-22.

B. Mishnah Yoma 6.

## 90. Sodom and Gomorrah.

A. Gen. 19.

B. *Sefer ha-Yashar*, 24-27.

C. Talmud Sanh. 109b.

D. *Yalkut* Gen. 83; Ex. Rab. 15.

## 91. The Wife of Lot.

A. Gen. 19.

B. Gen. Rab. 49.

C. Benjamin of Tudela (note 37); *Rabbi Gershon* (1624), p. 183. The Christian pilgrim who says about Lot's wife's pillar, "As the moon waxes and wanes so too does she," is Theodosius, 530 C.E., ed. Geyer, p. 146. Antoninus Martyr, in 570, writes: "But as for what they say about Lot's wife having diminished in size through being licked by animals, it is not true, for she stands just in the same condition as she originally was" (ed. Geyer, p. 169).

## 92. The Pool of Abraham.

A Bedouin guide from Bethlehem to the Dead Sea told me about this.

## 93. The Mosque of Truth.

Gen. 19.27-28. The fact that Abraham stood here is already mentioned by the pilgrim Paula in 382, who "came on the brow of Caphar Barucha (Beni Nayim), to which place Abraham followed God. From hence looking down upon Sodom and Gomorrah," ed. Tobler, ch. 12. Makdissi (note 44B), p. 173, repeated by Mujir al-Din (note 2A), p. 67. Here was the City Cain (Kain) of the tribe of Judah (Josh. 15.57). This name which recalls the name Cain was the origin of the legend that Cain was buried here.



## 94. How Jaffa was Captured.

This incident, which occurred during the reign of Totmosis III, King of Egypt (1501-1447 B.C.E.), is written on a papyrus which is exhibited in the British Museum, London. See E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Hieratic Papyri* (1923), p. 24, pl. XLVII.

## 95. The Miracle at Jaffa.

Tosefta Yoma 2.4; Yer. Yoma 3. In Bab. Yoma 38a, mention is made of Acco instead of Jaffa.

## 96. The Sea of Jaffa.

Yer. Shek. 6.2; *Sifri, Berakah*. See M. Azulai, native of Hebron about 1600, in his book *Hesed le-Abraham* (1685), III, 22. In *Midrash Tannaim* (ed. D. Hoffmann, 1908), p. 219, is written the "Sea of Haifa"; see Leg. 135.

## 97. The Rock of Andromeda.

*Plini Naturalis Historia*, V, 13; VI, 4; IX, 4. *Pomponii Melae De Chorographia* I, 11 (ed. C. Frick (1880), p. 16. Flavius Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 3, 9, 3. *Pausaniae Descriptio Graeciae*, IV, 35.

## 98. The Curse of the Governor.

After I had heard this legend from an Arab watchman of an orange-grove round Jaffa, I went to the Well of Abu Nabbut to copy the inscription. But I found no trace of the above-mentioned curse. Insread there is written: "What God wishes, will be! In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. This fountain was built by the victorious King, our Master, the Sultan Mahmud Chan, May God perpetuate his Kingdom in all generations . . . Health to all who drink—The year 1230" (Moslem era = 1815 C.E.). It is only in a country where the Arab inhabitants are mainly illiterate that such legends can be created and spread. The Arabic expression *mal'un ibn Mal'un*, the cursed, the son of the cursed one, is written on an inscription (from 1465 C.E.) in the mosque of the village Ajlun, in Transjordan.

## 99. The Mount of Napoleon.

This legend is well-known in Jaffa. Near Acco there is a hill which is called the little mount of Napoleon (or Mount Coeur de Lion), known in Arabic as *Tell al-Fuchar*, the pottery hill, and this legend is told. This hill is already mentioned by Guillebert de Lannoy, who visited Acco in the year 1422 C.E. He writes: "Outside the city is a small mound of earth formed artificially. This was made long ago by order of a Sultan, who posted himself upon it, when he besieged the city for six years and finally took it." See his *Voyages et Ambassades* (1840), p. 107.

## 100. The Village of Bene-Berak.

Talmud Ket. 111b; *Haggadah* of Passover.

## 101. The Village of Salamah.

A peasant of this village told me the story. Probably the village Kafarsalama which is mentioned in the first book of the Maccabees (7.31) was situated here. See F. Buhl, *Geographie des alten Palastina* (1896), p. 196.

## 102. The Village of Zarnuka.

I heard this from the Sheikh of the village. Hussein, the son of Ali and the grandson of Mohammed, was massacred at Karbala (Mesopotamia) in the year 680 C.E. In fact the name Zarnuka is derived from the word *Zarnuk*, which means a rivulet in Hebrew as well as in Arabic.

## 103. The Village of Zerifin.

Mishnah, Kelim 1.6; Yer. Shek. 5.1; Bab. Men. 64b. See Legend 132.

## 104. The Overturned Cistern.

Related by the inhabitants of Ramlah. According to an Arabic inscription this cistern was built in 789 C.E., that is, during the reign of the well-known Caliph Harun al-Raschid. See M. Van Berchem, "Inscriptions arabes de Syrie," in *Mémoires . . . de l'institut Egyptien*, III (1896), p. 422.

## 105. The Martyrs of Ludd.

Midrash Lam. 3.9.

## 106. The Cave of Ludd.

*Pesikta de-Rab Kahana.*

## 107. The Ascent of Beth-Horon.

A. Josh. 10.11-13; Talmud Ber. 54a.

B. Sanh. 32b; Tosefta Niddah 8.7. Footnote: Josh. 24.30; Talmud Shab. 105b; Pethahiah (note 17B), pp. 56-58. Rashi to Josh. 24.30 and to Judg. 2.9. It is related that after the destruction of Beth-ther (note 64) Hadrian went round Palestine, visiting the tombs of kings and prophets. He came to Timnat Heres, and when he saw there the tomb of Joshua, he said to the children of Israel: "Joshua gave you a fat and good land and his body lies among the mountains and rocks!" See *'Aktan de-Mar Ya'akob* (ed. E. Carmoly), 1842, p. 29. Heilo, 1333 (note 28A), writes: "The tomb of Samson is in the village of Zorah, and on it is drawn the jawbone of the ass with which Samson killed the Philistines."

## 108. The Village Kebab.

According to Pierotti (note 23), p. 62.

## 109. The Roofless Cave.

According to Clermont-Ganneau (note 61C) II, p. 235. The cave is called in Arabic: *Magharat al-Jaiyah* because, the Arabs say, *Jahat alaihum al-Magharah*, the cave fell in on them.

## 110. The Oven of Mother Eve.

Related by an Arab from the village Abu-Shushah. Footnote: Koran 11.40; 23.27. The tomb of Noah is shown in Syria and also in the village Dura near Hebron. In Judea near the village Allar al-Siflah (the lower Allar) there are heaps of stones called: *Hirbat Nuh*, the ruins of Noah. Close to them is 'Ain Bint Nuh, the spring of Noah's daughter. Near it is another spring called 'Ain al-Tannur, the Spring of the Oven. It is related that from this spring also a

stream of water flowed in the days of the flood. In the Koran it says about the flood of Noah: "until our sentence was put in execution and the oven poured forth water" (in Arabic: *wafara al-Tannur*). These "ovens" were shown not only in Palestine but also in Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia and India. In the olden days many legends were known in regard to the flood. It is told about "Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Hiyya who came upon great mountains where they found bones of human beings of the generation of the flood. And they walked through one of these bones a distance of three hundred steps." See *Zohar* on Noah, Jerusalem, 1844, vol. I, p. 62a.

### 111. The Rock of Destruction.

I heard this story in the vicinity of the colony Hartub (Artuf) between Jaffa and Jerusalem. See Z. Vilnay, *Hartub u-Sebibotehah* (Hartub and its surroundings) (1928), pp. 11-12.

### 112. The Vineyard of Jabneh.

Talmud Git. 66a; *Midrash Mishle*, 15.30.

### 113. The Pious Men of Ascalon.

A. Deut. Rab. 1.14.

B. Talmud Pes. 8; Yer. Pesahim.

### 114. The Witches of Ascalon.

Yer. Hag. 2.

### 115. The Treasures of Ascalon.

According to the *Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, Vol. III (1846), pp. 158-169. The Italian traveler G. Finati, who passed through Ascalon in 1815, speaks about the spot where Lady Stanhope dug for the treasures. See *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Giovanni Finati*, vol. II (1830), p. 130.

### 116. The Valley of the Ants.

Koran 27.16-18 and the historian Zakarija al-Kazwani, *Kitab athar al-Bilad*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (1848), p. 185. In Hebrew tradition

there are legends about Solomon and the ants. See *Ma'aseh ha-Nemalah u-Shelomoh ha-Melek* (the happening of the ant and Solomon the King), Jerusalem, 1869, p. 17.

117. The Wilderness of Gaza.

Num. 11.31; Talmud Shab. 145.

118. The Man from the South.

Talmud Ned. 9b.

119. The Wisdom of the Negeb.

A. Talmud B.B. 25b.

B. Tamid 32a.

120. The Forests of Sharon.

Related by an Arab from Jaffa.

121. The Prayer of Sharon.

According to Yer. Yoma, 4.2.

122. The Sycamore of Kefar Saba.

Talmud Niddah, 61a.

123. The Meeting at Antipatris.

Talmud Yoma 49a; *Megillat Ta'anit*, 9. According to Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 10, 8, 5, Alexander hastened to go up to Jerusalem after he had taken Gaza. And he met the high priest "at a place called Sapha—'a prospect,' for from thence you have a prospect both of Jerusalem and of the Temple."

124. Caesarea and its Martyrs.

*Ozar Massa'ot* (note 8), p. 61. It is told that on the place where the blood of Abel was shed, no plant ever grew. *Midrash Zutta*, ed. Buber, p. 38.

## 125. The Aqueduct of Caesarea.

An Arab told me this story, near the colony Benjāminah, in the neighborhood of Caesarea.

## 126. The River of the Crocodiles.

According to Fetellus (or Fretellus) who was Archdeacon of Antioch in Syria about 1200. His book is called *Locorum Sanctorum Terrae Jerusalem*. See English Translation, *PPTS* (note 41), V (1897), p. 47. Pocock (note 142A) writes: "A colony from some city in Egypt, that worshiped the crocodiles, came and settled here, and brought their deities along with them." J. G. MacGregor believes that he saw in 1868 a crocodile in the river Kishon near Haifa. See his book *Rob Roy on the Jordan* (1869).

## 127. The Blessing of Samaria.

According to *Midrash Sifri, Berakah*.

## 128. The Mountain of the King.

Yer. Demai, 2.1; Bab. Git. 57a; Ber. 44a. A Jewish pilgrim, Isaac ben Musa I, in 1541 (note 17C) writes: "The women in Palestine are few and they are blessed: they give birth to seven boys and afterwards to only one daughter."

## 129. The Praise of Schechem.

- A. Told to me by an Arab from Schechem.
- B. Innominatus V, ed. Neumann, pp. 272-3.

## 130. The Mountain Gerizim.

Talmud Hul. 6a. The commentary of Markah. See M. Heidenheim, *Bibliotheca Samaritana*, III (1896), pp. 48, 73. The Samaritan poet Abisha speaks of the *Mizbah* (Altar) *Abraham* as one of the glories of Gerizim. See loc. cit. p. 87; Geiger, *ZDMG* (*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*) XX, p. 156; Deut. 27. Some of the Christian pilgrims believed that the name of mount Elbel was from Abel, the son of Adam. Accordingly Theodericus writes (1172 C.E.): "Near Schechem are two mountains; one,

whereon Cain is said to have offered sacrifice to God of the fruits of the earth; the other, whereon Abel likewise offered sacrifice to God of the fatlings of his flock." Ernoul in the year 1231 calls Mount Gerizim, Mount Cain, and Mount Ebal = Mount Abel. See *PPTS* (note 41), VI (1897), p. 62. Compare Legend 2.

### 131. The Tomb of Joseph.

- A. Talmud Sotah 13a.
- B. Deut. Rab. 2.
- C. Gen. Rab. 79. Compare Legend 69A.

### 132. The Fountain of Soker.

Yer. Shek. 5.1; Bab. Men. 64b.

### 133. The Town of Samaria.

I Kings 16.23-24. Compare Leg. 103. Probably the real meaning of the name *Shomeron* is from the Hebrew *Shamar*, to watch, and *Shomeron* = the Watch Mount.

### 134. The Place of the Fire.

II Kings 1. A. Alt, "Ein Vergessenes Heiligtum des Propheten Elias," in *ZDPV* (note 44B), XLVIII (1925), p. 393.

### 135. The Sea of Haifa.

- A. Num. Rab. 13.17.
- B. *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* 137.2.

### 136. The Mollusc and the Purple.

Ex. 28; Talmud Shab. 26a; *Sifri, Berakah*.

### 137. How Purple was Discovered.

I remember this was told to me in Haifa when I was a lad. "It is related that the discovery of the dye is due to the dog of a Tyrian nymph which, crushing some of these shells (*Murex trunculus*) in its teeth, its mouth became stained with purple . . . To be exact this event occurred 1500 B.C.E. The colour was so beautiful that the

fair nymph expressed to her lover Hercules her desire to have a robe of similar hue. Hercules, of course, gratified her." See G. W. Tryon, *Manual of Conchology* (1880), vol. II, p. 43. S. Bochart in his book, *Hieroicoicon* (ed. 1663), vol. II, p. 740, who brings in the above legends, tries to find a similarity between the word *keleb*, dog, and the Syriac word *kilab*, dyer.

### 138. The Martyr of the War.

I heard this story many times from Arabs at Haifa.

### 139. The Children of Mount Carmel.

Talmud Sanh. 104a; *Midrash Ekah Zutta*, 4.

### 140. The Melons that Turned to Stone.

This legend I heard in my childhood. The pilgrim Antoninus Martyr writes in 570: "On Mount Carmel is found a stone, small and round, and its virtue is that if hung on to a woman or any animal, they will never miscarry." See *Antonini Placentini Itinerarium*, ed. P. Geyer (note 12A), p. 160. In the colony Hederah in Samaria, I was told the same legend, but instead of a field of melons appeared the swamp which is called *Birkat al-Battich*, the pool of the water-melons, which is near the colony. In medieval times fossils used to be considered tonics against various well-known diseases, amongst which are *Lapides Judaici* and the Virgin's Peas (*Calculi*). The English traveler Thomas Shaw (1722) writes: "In the mountains of Carmel . . . we gather a great many stones which, being in the form, it is pretended, of olives, melons, peaches, and other fruits, are commonly imposed on pilgrims, not only as such curiosities, but as antidotes against several distempers" (note 83), pp. 372-3.

### 141. The Cave of Elijah.

Simon Bermann, *Sefer Massa'ot Shim'on* (1879), p. 196. Compare legend No. 4. Another famous cave attributed to Elijah is in the village near Damascus, called Jobar. Here there is a great synagogue, in a corner of which there is a small ante-room from which steps lead down to the dark narrow cave of Elijah. In this a round stone, in fact, the capital of a column, is said to be the seat on which



Elijah was seated "in the desert of Damascus," when he anointed Hazael, King of Syria, Jehu, King of Israel and Elisha the Prophet (I Kings 19.15). Not only Jews but also Moslems and Christians come to visit this cave of Elijah, in order to obtain healing by spending the night in the cave. The visitors powder their eyes with lime that has been scratched off the wall of the cave.

#### 142. The Praise of Acco.

A. According to R. Pococke, *A Description of the East*, II (1745), p. 53. The Persian traveler Nasir Khosrau (note 31), who came to Acco in 1047, writes: "The first day I went and visited the tomb of Akkah, who is the founder of the city of Acco, a very pious and great personage." According to William of Tyre, the two names—Acco and Ptolemais—come from two brothers who fortified the city.

B. Sam. Rab. 89; *Sifri*, 'Ekeb.

C. Gen. Rab. 13.

D. Yakut (note 11), III, p. 238. Fetellus (note 126) writes (1130) about Acco: "Here, once a year, in the month of August, it happens that on the seashore, not far from the walls, on the east, fountains spring up and flow down in rivulets to the sea, curing those who drink of their waters according to their wish. On this account they are frequented by those staying between the Euphrates and the Nile."

#### 143. The Discovery of Glass.

A. *Plinii Naturalis Historia*; *Midrash Sifri*, *Vezot ha-Berakah*, 5.19; 36.65.

B. Num. Rab. 13.17.

C. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 2, 10, 2.

#### 144. The Ladders of Tyre.

Gen. Rab. 39.

#### 145. The Cave of Sighs.

An Arab told me this on the way from Acco to Tyre. The traveler U. J. Seetzen, who passed this way in 1806, mentions the legend briefly. See *Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina*, etc., II (1854), p. 111.

#### 146. The Land of Issachar.

A. According to Gen. Rab. 98.

B. The first verse was written, according to G. Dalmann in the

*Beitrage zur Alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft* (K. Budde zum Siebzigsten Geburtstag), 1920, p. 51. The second verse I heard from an Arab in Samaria.

147. The River Kishon.

Talmud Pes 118b; *Sifri*, 'Ekeb.

148. The River Ginnai.

Talmud Hul. 7a; Yer. Demai, 1, 3.

149. The Valley of Beth-Shean.

A. Talmud 'Er. 19a.

B. Mujir al-Din (note 2A), p. 407.

150. The Fountain of Goliath.

Bordeaux (note 12A); Eshtori ha-Parhi in his book *Caftor wa-Ferah* (Bud and Flower), ed. Lunz. Perhaps one of the mountains of Gilboa was called Gilead, which is also the name of the mountain in Transjordan, opposite the Valley of Jezreel. When Gideon said to his followers: "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead," he meant this part of Gilboa. The name Gilead was corrupted in the Arab tradition perhaps to the form of Galud, which resembles the name Goliath, and that is the reason of the above legend. In a folk epic on David and Goliath, which is known among the Jews in Kurdistan round Persia, is described the battle in "the field of Megiddo," that is the southwestern part of the valley of Jezreel. See the periodical *Zion*, vol. IV (1930), p. 110. According to the Bible, the battle of David and Goliath took place in Judea round the valley of Elah, now called Wadi al-Sunt, near the village Beit Jubrin. Many medieval travelers place this valley (*Vallis Therebintus*) between Jerusalem and Jaffa, now near the colony Moza. Antoninus Martyr in 570 writes: "Twenty miles from Jerusalem we arrived at the mountain of Gilboa (?) where David killed Goliath . . . Goliath lies there in the middle of the road, having above his head a great mass of wood, and upon that a heap of stones, so much so that for twenty miles round one cannot find a single stone. This is because it is the custom that everyone who passes by should bring with him

three stones which he throws upon the tomb. So likewise did we. Upon those mountains rain never falls, and in their recesses during the night unclean spirits are seen rolling about like fleeces of wool or waves of the sea." Ed. Geyer, p. 179. Also near Jerusalem was shown the place where Goliath was killed. At the northwest angle of the present city wall near the New Gate, there are remains of a great castle, called by the Arabs *Kalat Jalud*, the castle of Goliath. The Russian Pilgrim, Abbot Daniel (note 153), in 1106, writes: "Close to Jerusalem, a bow-shot east of the Tower of David, is the place where David killed Goliath . . ." Another traveler speaks of the brook of Kidron as the place where David gathered the stones wherewith he slew Goliath.

#### 151. Gilboa the Barren Mountain.

II Samuel 1, 21. Uri Ben Simon (note 61B), p. 35.

#### 152. Tabor and Carmel.

A. Gen. Rab. 99a.

B. *Midrash Tehillim* 68.9.

C. *Pesikta de-Rab Kanana*, 144.2.

#### 153. The Cave of Melchizedek.

Gen. 14. Here it is written that the kings went out to meet Abraham "at the valley of Shaveh, which is the King's dale." The Russian text of Abbot Daniel was edited by M. A. Venevitinov, published by the Russian Palestine Society (1885), p. 68. I used the English translation published by the *PPTS* (note 41), IV, p. 68. According to another tradition the place of the meeting of Melchizedek was in Jerusalem on Mount Golgotha. In the valley of Jezreel, south of Mount Tabor, there is another place connected with Abraham, when he went to the north of Palestine. In the village Lajun, not far from the ruins of Megiddo, there is a fountain. The Persian Moslem Ibn al-Fakih writes in 903: There is just outside Lajun a large stone of round form, over which is built a dome, which is called the Mosque of Abraham. A copious stream of water flows under the stone and it is reported that Abraham struck the stone with his staff, and there immediately flowed from it water enough . . . See his book *Kitab al-Buldan* (ed. M. J. de Goeje, 1885), p. 117. See also Yakut (note 11), IV, p. 351.

## 154. The Hill of Shimron.

I heard this legend from a Bedouin of the valley of Beth-Shean. See Tyrwith Drake. *OS* (note 63), 1873, p. 58. A. Aaronsohn, *Bulletin de la Société Botanique de France*, 4 Série, XIII (1913), pp. 498-499. The tribe of Beni Hilal lived in Nejed in Northern Arabia. Owing to their defeat in wars, they were compelled to migrate to various countries, and also to the eastern border of Palestine round the mountains of Hauran, which were once called the mountains of Hilal. The migrations of the Beni Hilal and their wars form the historical background of a collection of heroic tales and love stories. This collection is known as *Sirat* (history) *Beni Hilal*. There is a romance called *Marj Amer wa-al-Kuds*, the Plain of Jezreel and Holy Jerusalem. See W. Ahlwardt, *Die Arabischen Handschriften der Königl. Bibliothek Zu Berlin*, VII (1896), Nos. 9251-9262.

## 155. Simonia and Tarbenet.

A. Yer. Yeb. 12.6; Gen. Rab. 81.

B. Yer. Meg. 4.5. See S. Klein, *Beiträge Zur Geographie und Geschichte Galilaas* (1909), p. 84.

## 156. The Mount of Cain.

A. According to *Sifr Yusha ben Nun*, the Book of Joshua the son of Nun, which was written in Arabic in the thirteenth century. See ed. G. J. Juynboll, *Chronicon Samaritanum* (1848), pp. 26-35. In the Hebrew text of the Samaritan book of Joshua, the genuineness of which is doubtful, are told many details about this war in Kimon or Alon Kimon. See *ZDMG* (note 130), LXII (1908), pp. 265-273.

B. This legend is mentioned in Gen. Rab. 22.12 and *Midrash Yelammedenu*, *Ozar Midrashim* (ed. Wertheimer) I, p. 71, but no mention is made of the place. Perhaps Burchard in the year 1280 (note 79B) is the first who mentions it in connection with the above mount. Gen. 4.23-24.

## 157. The Town of Sepphoris.

Talmud Meg. 6a; Yer. Ta'an. 66c. According to Ket. 103b, Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi was buried at Beth Shearim, a village in the surroundings of Sepphoris. See Pethahiah (note 17B). Heilprin in his book *Seder ha-Dorot* (ed. 1769) says in the name of *Gelilot Erez-*

*Israel* that a fountain is to be found in Sepphoris, that flows during the weekdays and stops on Sabbath days. *Gelilot Erez Israel* was written by Rabbi Gershon ben Eliezer ha-Levi and published first in 1634, when the Jesuits ordered it to be burnt. Compare Legend 51.

#### 158. The Praise of Tiberias.

Talmud Meg. 5-6; *Sefer Zerubbabel*, a collection of old legends about the coming of the Messiah. I used the Vilna edition (1819), p. 26. When the Turkish Sultan Sulaiman I granted in 1560 to the Jewish Minister Don Joseph ha-Nasi, Tiberias and its surroundings, the Jews hired many Moslem laborers for the rebuilding. A Moslem Sharif who opposed this rebuilding agitated among the workers, saying that when Tiberias is rebuilt for the Jews, their religion would prevail and the Moslem religion and all the Moslems would be sinners. Whereupon the Moslem workmen refused to work. See Joseph ben Joshua ha-Cohen (1575) in his book '*Emek ha-Baka*' (1852), p. 128.

#### 159. How Tiberias was Cleaned.

According to Josephus, *Ant.* 18, 2, 3; Talmud Shab. 34a; Gen. Rab. 79.6; *Pesikta*, 89b.

#### 160. Twelve Months in Tiberias.

According to Makdissi (note, 44B).

#### 161. The Miracle of Tiberias.

The details of this event were written by Rabbi Jacob Berab in a booklet called *Zimrat ha-Arez* (The Song of the Land) (1745). Berab who lived at Tiberias was a son-in-law of Rabbi Hayyim Abu-al-Afia.

#### 162. The Hot Baths of Tiberias.

I was told this by an Arab on the way to Tiberias. The belief in devils heating springs is an old one. Referring to the words of Solomon in Eccl. 2.9, "I got me men singers and women singers and the delights of the sons of men, and she-devils and devils (*Shidah we-Shidot*; English version: musical instruments), Midrash Eccl. Rab. 2.8 explains: "'the delights of the son of men,' are the hot baths; 'devils'—these are the demons who heat the baths."

## 163. Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha-Nes.

Talmud 'Ab. Zarah, 18. The Nickname *Ba'al ha-Nes* is first mentioned by Uri ben Simon (note 61B), p. 57. He says that the tomb is in Gush-Halah. An anonymous traveler speaks about Meir who was buried standing (note 165).

## 164. The Miracle of the Pillars.

The story was published by the Rabbis of Tiberias in the Hebrew newspaper *ha-Magid*, XI, No. 12.

## 165. The Grave of Jeremiah.

Yer. Kil. 9; Ta'an. 9.3. In Bab. Ket. 35a it is written that this Rabbi was buried on his side, but the Jews of Tiberias say that he was buried standing. See Uri ben Simon (note 61B), p. 41, and note 163.

## 166. The Cave of Rab Kahana.

A. This was told me by an old Jew of Tiberias.

B. Talmud B.K. 117.

## 167. Rabbi Akiba and his Pupils.

*Midrash Eleh Ezkerah*; Talmud Yeb. 62; Eccl. Rab.; *Midrash Mishle*, 9.2.

## 168. Rabbi Hiyya and Rab Huna.

Talmud Sotah 49; M.K. 25a; B.M. 85b.

## 169. The Tomb of Maimonides.

I heard this many times from Jews of Tiberias. Maimonides visited Palestine in the year 1165. See Eleazar Ben Moses Azkari of Safed, in his book, written in 1588: *Sefer Haredim*, ch. *ha-Teshubah* (ed. 1601), p. 76. Elijah Hayyim (Gennazano) speaks, in 1530, about Maimonides' letter sent from Jerusalem to Egypt wherein is mentioned his visit to Palestine. See *Iggeret Hamudot*, ed. A. W. Greenup (1912), and *Shalsholet ha-Kabbalah* (note 187). From Palestine Maimonides went to Cairo, where he died in 1204. Jacob the messenger from Paris, in the year 1228, is the first who mentions

the tomb of Maimonides in Tiberias (see *Ozar Massa'ot* (note 8), p. 69). Rabbi Simon Ben Zemah Duran (Rashbaz), who lived in 1361-1444, mentions also that Maimonides is buried in Tiberias. See his book *ha-Tashbez*, vol. I (1738), art. 72, p. 36B. See also Saadia Ben Maimon Ibn-Danan (fifteenth century), in *Hemdah Genuzah*, ed. Edelman (1856), p. 31. Samuel Shalem, in 1566, says that "Maimonides is buried in Tiberias and others say in the grave of the Patriarchs (Machpelah) in Hebron." See *Sefer Yuhasin*, ed. Filipowski (1857), p. 220. *Zikron Yerushalayim*, ed. J. Babani (1759), p. 15. Joseph Samberi, in 1673, mentions that Maimonides was buried in the Synagogue *Mughrabah* in Cairo, and from there was taken to Tiberias. When the people exhumed him, one of the toes of his foot had disappeared. And only afterwards was it revealed to a wise man in a dream where to find that toe. When the people found it, it was also taken to Tiberias. See Ad. Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles* (1887), p. 134.

#### 170. The Sea of Chinnereth.

A. Ps. 24.2; Talmud B.B. 74b. In an old guide book it is written: "The lake is sometimes called Gennesaret, because it generates a breeze (*generat auram*) and gathers a strong wind by which the waters are disturbed and storms arise." *PPTS* (note 41), VI (1894), p. 36.

#### 171. The Sea of Galilee.

This legend was known in Russia in various versions. See O. Dahnhardt, *Natursagen*, I (1907), p. 44.

#### 172. The Well of Miriam.

Num. 21 17-18; *Tosefia* Suk. 3. In Talmud Shab. 35b it is written that this well was sunk in the sea near the foot of Mount Carmel. Round Tiberias is also shown the tomb of Miriam.

#### 173. The Rock of the Ants.

The Arabic name *Hajar al-Namleh* is mentioned the first time by the Moslem traveler Abd al-Ghani in the year 1690. See *ZDMG* (note 130), XXXVI (1882), p. 390. The Russian traveler A. Noroff, who passed through Palestine in 1835, mentions this rock and adds: "It is told about a Bedouin who dared to disturb the peace of the

ants who lived on this rock and lost his sight." See *Meine Reise nach Palästina*, II (1862), p. 203. In medieval times a rock in the Sea of Galilee was pointed out as having the tombs of David and Solomon on it. See Yakut (note 11), I, p. 515; III, p. 509.

#### 174. The Valley of Gennesar.

- A. Gen. Rab. 98; *Sifri, Berakah*. Compare Leg. 80C.
- B. Talmud Pes. 8b.

#### 175. The Valley of Arbael.

- A. Yer. Peah 7.3. *Tanhuma ha-Kadum*.
- B. Talmud Yer. Ta'an. 4.5.
- C. Yer. (ed. A. M. Lunz), Ber. 2.
- D. *Sefer Zerubbabel* (note 158). The *chanson* of Eliezer was published in the festival prayer-book (Mahzor) Romania (1510), p. 143. See A. Landshut, *Amude ha-'Abodah* (1857), p. 43. To the passage in Gen. 35.21, in which Jacob is mentioned as pitching his tent "beyond Migdal-eder," The Tower of the Flock, the *Targum* of Jonathan adds: "This is the place where King Messiah shall be revealed in the end of time." Migdal-eder was round Bethlehem and is represented by the present *Keniset al-Rawat*, the Synagogue of the Shepherds, or *Khirbet Sir el-Ghaanem*, the Ruin of the Sheepfold. In Jewish tradition the place where the Messiah is expected to appear is called *Bet Arba*, *Birat Arba* or *Birat Melek*, the capital of the King. Another *Targum* to Ex. 12.42, says: "Moses cometh forth from the desert and the Messiah goeth forth from Roma." Rabbi Jacob in 1228 (note 8), p. 70, speaks about the village Romi in Galilee: "And there is a tradition among the inhabitants that the Messiah will appear in this place!" Rabbi Uri ben Simon (note 61B), p. 61, speaks about Roma in Galilee, and "here there is a cavern of Caizram from which the Messiah is expected to appear." Probably that is the present ruin called Rumeh, near Sepphoris in the vicinity of Nazareth. See Leg. 157.

#### 176. The River Jordan.

- A. Talmud Ber. 55a. The derivation of Jordan from *Yor* and *Dan* is given by nearly every Christian traveler. The first time it occurs is in a commentary to Matthew by Jerome. See also *Onomasticon*, s.v. Dan, ed. E. Klostermann (1904), pp. 76-77. In many



medieval maps the Jordan is drawn with two sources, *Fons Yôr* and *Fons Dan*.

B. Job 40.15; Gen. Rab. 4. Footnote: H. Timberlake, *A True and Strange Discourse of the Travailes of Two English Pilgrimes* (1603), pp. 22-23. The waters of Jordan are holy from the olden days. Pilgrims used to take this water as a souvenir from the Holy Land. Breidenbach in 1483 (note 67b) sailed back in a boat to his country. He relates that one day the sea was very stormy and the sailors believed that the cause of the tempest was that the pilgrims had stolen relics from the holy places and brought away water from the Jordan as souvenirs with them.

#### 177. The Cave of Panias.

A. *Mekilta de-Rabbi Shim'on*. See also L. Ginzberg, *Ginze Schechter* (1928), p. 371.

B. Flavius Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 3.17; Talmud Sanh. 98a. Blood is one of the signs of the end of time. The prophet Joel 2.30, speaks about "the great and terrible day of the Lord," of which the Lord said: "I will shew wonders . . . blood and fire . . . the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood." In a book on the Messiah it is said that one of the signs of his coming is that the dew will be blood, all the sinners will drink thereof and die, and all the world will be covered with blood." See "*Otot ha-Mashiah*" (The Signs of the Messiah), ed. Jellinek, *Beit ha-Midrash* II.

#### 178. The Lake of Ram.

I was told this by a Druze from the village of Majdal Shams, at the foot of Mount Hermon.

#### 179. The Hill of the Judge.

I remember this story from my youth.

#### 180. The Bridge of the Daughters.

The name *Yisr Benat Ya'akub* was given in modern times. The Moslem geographer Abulfeda in 1300 calls the spot *Bait Ya'akub*, the house of Jacob. Near this bridge was a ford called: *Makhadat al Ahzan*, the Ford of Lamentations, which according to Yakut (note 11), I, p. 775, took its name from the fact that Jacob lamented here for his son Joseph. I. L. Burckhardt, who passed through

Galilee in 1812, calls this bridge *Djiser Beni Yaacob*, the bridge of the sons of Jacob, and writes: "The whole of the mountains in the vicinity is covered with large pieces of black stone. The country people relate that the tears of Jacob dropping upon the ground while he was in search of his son (Joseph), turned the white stones black, and they in consequence call these stones Jacob's tears (*Demu Jacob*).” See *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (1822), pp. 315-318. The first writer who mentions the pit of Joseph in Galilee is perhaps the Moslem Istakhri about the year 950. See his book *Kitab Masalek al-Mamalek* (ed. M. I. de Goeje, 1870), p. 59. In the map of Breidenbach, 1483 (note 67B), is drawn the pit (*Cisterna Joseph*) in Galilee. Another Joseph's pit was shown in the Valley of Dothan, Samaria, where according to the Bible (Gen. 37.17), was the pit into which Joseph was cast. Kazwini (note 116), p. 136, mentions another pit near the village Sanjil between Schechem and Jerusalem. Mujir al-Din (note 2) writes: "The two cisterns (Solomon's Pools, See Legend 68) which are called *Al-Marjiah* are near the village of Artas (near Bethlehem). This is the reason of the name *Al-Marjiah*. When the sons of Jacob took their brother Joseph to throw him into the pit, they passed the tomb of Rachel, his mother. When Joseph saw the tomb, he threw himself from the back of his camel and said: O mother, lift up your head and behold what calamity has befallen thy son! When they heard that, they returned (in Arabic: *Raja*) and since then they called this place *Al-Marjiah*, the Place of Return."

#### 181. The Bridge of Meetings.

I heard this from Bedouins in the valley of the Jordan. In fact this bridge was called *Jisr Al-Majamah*, which means also the Bridge of Confluence, because near it is the confluence of the waters of the Jordan with the waters of the river Yarmuk, which flows from Transjordan. Others say that this bridge was called: *Jisr Al-Majamah*, the Bridge of Gathering, because of a contest of forty Arab poets, who contended here in verse for the love of an Arab maiden. See Finn: *Byeway in Palestine*, p. 105; *Survey of Western Palestine*, II (1882), p. 132.

#### 182. The Praise of Safed.

Yer. R.H. 2; *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 24. The story of Molcho who came to his fiancée is told by Joseph Samberi in 1673. See Ad.

Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles* (1887), p. 147. Judith Montefiore: *Private Journal of a Visit to Egypt and Palestine* (1844), p. 236; Gen. Rab. 84.8. Legends about the *Yanuka* are mentioned in the *Zohar* (ed. 1844), I, pp. 69, 148, etc.

### 183. The Earthquake at Safed.

A. Joseph Sofer, *Shibhe Erez Yisrael* (The Praise of the Land of Israel) (1804), English translation, *QS* (note 63), 1914, pp. 67-83. Sofer came to Palestine in the year 1762 and lived at Safed.

B. In the periodical *Yerushalayim*, IX (1911), p. 168.

### 184. The Synagogue of ha-Ari.

A. 'Emek ha-Melek (note 75).

### 185. The Synagogue of Aboab.

I heard this story many times at Safed. See *Hibbat Yerushalayim* (note 40), p. 11, and *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 31.

### 186. The Synagogue of ha-Bannai.

A. Ex. Rab. 13.1.

B. This legend is told in Talmud Ta'an. 24, about Rabbi Jose from Yokereth. His tomb was shown near Safed and he was called also *Zaddik ha-Te'anim*, the Saint of the Figs. The Jews of Safed attribute this miracle to Rabbi ha-Bannai. This Rabbi is perhaps the same as Banna'a, who entered the Machpelah. See Leg. 72.

### 187. The Dome of Hosea, the Son of Beeri.

An anonymous Jewish visitor in 1522 wrote (note 44A), p. 17: "The Karaite Master (Muallem) from Damascus built on the grave of Hosea ben Beeri a beautiful and splendid building." Simhah ben Joshua (note 191), p. 245, speaks in 1744 about the cave of Hosea which is in fact that of Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah. "It is said that a gentile officer escaped from death and hid himself in this cave. When he was in safety he ordered this building with the dome to be erected." Gedaliah ben Yahya writes (1580) in the name of the elders of Salonica (Greece) that Hosea ben Beeri died

in Babylon and his corpse was put on a camel which came to Safed where Hosea is now buried. See *Shalsholet ha-Kabbalah* (Chain of Tradition) (ed. 1587), p. 19a, and also Yehiel Heilprin, about 1728, in his book *Seder ha-Dorot* (Order of the Generations) (ed. 1769), p. 33a. Compare Leg. 169.

188. The Grave of Rabbi Phinehas.

I heard this tale in Safed. See *Hibbat Yerushalayim* (note 40), p. 15.

189. On the Way to En-Zetim.

*'Emek ha-Melek* (note 75).

190. Rabbi Judah Bar Il'ai.

A. *Kav ha-Yashar* (note 30B) (ed. 1722), p. 7b; *Shibhe ha-Ari* (1875), p. 10.

B. The anonymous traveler from Venice in 1496; published in *ha-Maamer* by Lunz, p. 127. A similar legend is told by the anonymous traveler of 1522 (note 44B), p. 17.

191. The Cockerel Saint.

I heard this legend in Safed. The first who mentions this is Simhah ben Joshua in 1744. See his Itinerary *Ahabat Zion* (The Love of Zion) or *Sippure Erez ha-Galil* (The Stories of the Land of Galilee) in *Ozar Massa'ot* (note 8), p. 246.

192. The Ravine of Meron.

Midrash Ex. Rab. 52.3

193. The Grave of Rabbi Simon.

According to Sofer (note 183B).

194. The Grave of Rabbi Eliezer.

Eccl. Rab. 11. According to Talmud B.M. 84b, Eliezer died at the village of Akbara, south of Safed.

## 195. The Cave of Hillel the Elder

A. Pethahiah (note 17B), p. 57. Rabbi Jacob in *Ozar Massa'ot* (note 8), p. 68.

## 196. Rabbi Johanan ha-Sandlar.

*Hibbat Yerushalayim* (note 40), p. 27b; *Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 56b.

## 197. The Lintel and the Messiah.

I heard about this many times in Meron and Safed. In *Midrash Nistarot Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai*, in the periodical *Bet ha-Midrash* (note 1B), III, p. 82, are mentioned the Moslem Califs and the end of their rule. It is said: "When you see the eastern lintel (?) of the Mosque of Damascus fall down, that is a sign that the kingdom of the children of the East has fallen. And then will come the salvation of Israel."

## 198. The Martyrs of Peki'in.

I heard this from a Jew in Peki'in.

## 199. The Saint of the Mills.

I heard this from a Jew in Peki'in.

## 200. The Miller of Peki'in.

*Sha'are Yerushalayim*, p. 58.

## 201. The Cave of Simon Bar Yohai.

This legend is already mentioned in Talmud Shab. 33b, without actually giving the name of the place. In Midrash Eccl. Rab. 10, the cave is called *Me'arat de-Peka*, the Cave of Peka, probably the old name of Peki'in. See also *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* (ed. Buber), p. 85b. The anonymous Jewish traveler in 1522 (note 44A) speaks about al-Bukea, which is the Arabic name of Peki'in: "And there is to be found the cave where Simon hid himself." See I. Ben-Zevi, *Shear Yashub*. The Arabic and Hebrew songs which were sung in

honor of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai are collected by A. Bankabza in a pamphlet called *Piyyut Bar-Yohai* (Hymn of the son of Yohai), (1890).

202. Galilee and its Inhabitants.

A. Gen. Rab. 20; Talmud Meg. 6a.

B. 'Er. 53b; Meg. 24b.

C. Talmud Sotah 49; 'Er. 43; Sanh. 97. See *Sefer Zohar Torah*, ed. Rosenberg (1925), V, pp. 142-4. In Safed lived Rabbi Joseph Della-Reina in the sixteenth century, who wanted to bring Messiah. See Moses Cordovero, *Sefer Pardes Rimonim* (Garden of Pomegranates) (1591) and Abraham Moses, *Sefer Meora'ot 'Olam* (Events of the World), (1756), pp. 7-16.

203. Kabul and its Graves.

In Talmud Shab. 54a, it is said that Kabul is a land which does not produce fruits. Josephus (*Antiq.* 8.5.3) tells about Kabul, "which name, if it be interpreted according to the language of the Phoenicians, denotes: what does not please." See Hurwitz, *Hibbat Yerushalayim* (note 40). Sofer in 1762 (note 183A) is the first who mentions this peculiar cave. A Jewish pilgrim in 1481 narrates about Jerusalem: "And there is a pit where lads and girls who did not want to surrender to the sword of the enemy were thrown. The Arabs say that in the night of *Tish'ah be-Ab* there is heard a loud voice weeping and crying from the midst of this pit." See Hebrew text published in *ha-Maamer* (ed. A. M. Lunz), vol. III (1919), p. 9. Abraham Ibn Ezra lived in Spain and died about 1167. He traveled in many countries and perhaps, as many suppose, also in Palestine. Abraham Zacuto relates in 1500 that Ibn Ezra is buried in Palestine. See *Sefer Yuhasin*, ed. H. Filipowski (1852), p. 218. Judah Halevi came to Palestine and was murdered there about 1140. It is said that when he arrived at the wall of Jerusalem he threw himself prostrate upon the ground and sang his most beautiful elegy, *Zion halo Tishali*. At that instant he was ridden down and killed by an Arab (or Crusader). See *Shalshet ha-Kabbalah* (note 187), p. 40b. Pethahiah in the year 1187 (note 17) says that he saw the tomb of Judah Halevi in Tiberias. Ibn Gabirol died about 1058 in Spain and probably never visited Palestine. It is related that a Moslem, jealous of Gabirol's poetic gifts, slew him and buried him beneath the roots of a fig tree. The tree bore fruit abundantly which had extraordinary sweetness.

## 204. The Two Villages.

According to the anonymous traveler (see note 44A), p. 23.

## 205. Honi the Circle-Maker.

Talmud Ta'an. 23.

## 206. The City of Refuge.

Tosefta Mak. 3.5; Talmud Mak. 10b; B.B. 100b.

## 207. The Colony Aijelet Ha-Shahar.

This name is a Hebrew translation of the Arabic *Nijmat al-Subh*, which means the Star of the Morning. I heard this legend from one of the Jewish settlers in this colony.

## 208. The Snow-capped Hermon.

This legend was created, according to the one about Tabor (note 152).

## 209. The Place of the Promise.

Gen. 15. Uri ben Simon (note 61B), p. 49. *Iggeret mesappere Yehusta shel Zaddike de Ar'a de-Yisrael* (Epistle describing the genealogy of the Saints of the Land of Israel), issued by the poor of Jerusalem and printed in 1626. I used the edition of S. S. Richett (1676) from Safed. Sofer (note 183A) said: "I have also seen the place where God made a covenant with Abraham, peace be upon him! This is a very lofty place. From there I saw the whole land of Haveloh (huleh) to its end, and also other wonders."

## 210. The Village of the Prophet Job.

Masudi mentions the bath of Job in Nawa. The Rock of Job is actually an Egyptian monument of Rameses. See A. Musil, *Northern Hegaz* (1926), p. 232. *Joanni Chrysostomi . . . Homiliae XXI de Statuis ad populum Antiochenum habitae*, Homil. V (Greek and Latin), ed. MPCC (note 22). Series Graeca, Tom. 49 (1859), p. 69. English translation Pusey, *Library of the Fathers* (1842), p. 92. Compare Leg. 56.

## 211. Why it Was Called Mahanaim.

Gen. 32.1; *Midrash Tanhuma*, 3; *Pfj* (*Palästinajahrbuch*) (1913), p. 72.

## 212. In the Mountains of Gebal.

Talmud Ket. 112a.

## 213. The Spring of Zughar.

Makdissi (note 44B), p. 178. According to medieval Christian travelers, Anti-Christ will appear in Chorazin, which is near Capernaum. J. Mandeville writes (1336): "In Chorasim shall Anti-Christ be born, as some say . . ." This Anti-Christ shall be nourished in Beth-saida, and he shall reign in Capernaum; and therefore saith Holy Writ: . . . "Woe be to thee, Chorasim, woe be to thee, Beth-saida!" Anti-Christ is called in Jewish tradition Armilus and will be born, before the coming of the Messiah, in a marble statue of a beautiful girl which is in Rome. See *Otot ha-Mashiah* (note 177).

## 214. Petra and its Inhabitants.

Koran 2.57. In *Midrash Yelammedenu* it is said that Moses smote the rock and all the rocks in the desert were split and water flowed from them, and therefore it is written in the Book of Psalms (78.15): "He clave the rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink as out of the great depths." See *JPOS* (*Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*), IX (1929), p. 216. This legend is told by the Bedouins of Liatneh round Petra, to whom the Bedul are affiliated.

## 215. The Palace of Pharaoh's Daughter.

*JPOS* (note 218), IX (1929), pp. 145-6. For another variation see Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, II (1917), p. 108.

## 216. The Cave of Rakim.

Makdissi (note 44B), p. 175. The Moslem Istakhri (950) (note 180) mentions that Rakim is in Balka (Transjordan). The name of Rakim in the form of Rekem is already mentioned in Mishnah, Gittin. The cave is mentioned in Koran, chapter: The Cave (*al-*



*Khaf*) 15.8: "Dost thou consider that the companions of the cave and al-Rakim were one of our signs, and a great miracle?"—The origin of this legend is Christian. See *Acta Sanctorum* (ed. Bollandus) Julius, vol. VI (1868), pp. 375-397. See also Clermont Ganneau, *RAO*, III (1900), pp. 292-303. A. Musil, in his *Kusejr Amra* (1902), p. 14, tells about the ruins in the south of Amman which are called *Hirbat al-Rakim*. The Bedouins relate that in one of the caves (called al-Khaf), "once upon a time ninety saints slept here for forty years."

217. The Wilderness of Shur.

*Midrash Tanhuma ha-Kadum, Beshallah*, 17.

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